



Prepared for the City of Desert Hot Springs

Draft Parking Management Plan

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Executive Summary

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the City of Desert Hot Springs engaged Walker Consultants (“Walker”) to conduct a Parking Management Study to analyze current parking and access needs and opportunities in the City’s downtown and in the Industrial Cannabis Area in part to plan for future growth. The study includes an overview of the existing planning context, parking supply and demand observations and quantifications, key stakeholder and community outreach, and planning and policy recommendations that align with existing goals and policies outlined in the General Plan and SCAG’s goals for this engagement. Key findings of the report include:

- The City of Desert Hot Springs’ General Plan includes goals related to parking management, including: efficient land use patterns, innovative parking solutions, infill revitalization, prioritizing industrial development, streamlining the permit process, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and developing a multimodal approach to transportation.
- The Downtown Study Area has ample parking availability, and much of the downtown is currently covered in surface parking lots. Most spaces sit empty all of the time, and during typical peak conditions, drivers rarely have to walk far to reach their destinations.
- In the Industrial Cannabis Study Area, most developments provide more than enough off-street parking to meet the typical parking demand of their employees. Public on-street parking also has low utilization. One large work site experiences some parking and access difficulties, primarily during shift change.
- Outreach revealed that both key stakeholders and community members are interested in economic development, street safety improvements, and better multi-modal options throughout the City. Employees in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area were generally unaware of shared mobility services and regional commuter incentive programs, which could improve parking availability and provide more sustainable and equitable transportation options for employees.
- In light of existing and future conditions, and the community priorities revealed through outreach, this report’s recommendations for (1) short-term and ongoing strategies and (2) a framework for considering potential long-term strategies include:
 - **Short-term and ongoing strategy recommendations**
 1. Repeal minimum parking requirements.
 2. Facilitate shared/public parking.
 3. Discourage unshared parking.
 4. Allow for mixed-use and infill developments.
 5. Support walking, biking, and shared mobility solutions.
 - **Potential longer-term strategy recommendations**
 1. Manage public parking based on demand.
 2. Invest in new parking technologies.
 3. Create a parking benefit district.
 4. Prepare to manage public parking with dedicated City or contract staff.

Existing Conditions

Planning Context

- The City’s General Plan already contains many goals and policies related to parking and access in several of its plan elements, including Land Use and Community Design, Mobility and Infrastructure, Economic Development, Open Space and Natural Resources, and Health and Wellness. These goals include:
 - Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled
 - Infill Revitalization
 - Streamline Permit Process
 - Community Health through Land Use Planning
 - Develop a Multimodal Approach
 - Prioritize Industrial Development
 - Efficient Land Use Patterns
 - Innovative Parking Solutions
 - Greenhouse Gas Reduction
- The current zoning regulations prohibit mixed-use development in key areas, limiting the City’s potential to reduce vehicle miles traveled and facilitate sustainable modes of travel, including walking and biking.
- The municipal code establishes off-street parking mandates for different land uses, making vehicle travel more attractive and convenient than it would be if parking provision were based on market demand. Developers are not required to provide similar benefits to serve those who travel by other modes.
- The City has a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and is in the process of making street improvements that will improve conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Despite the City’s weather conditions—including high temperatures and frequent winds—many residents have expressed a desire for safe active transportation infrastructure, such as bike paths and pedestrian crosswalks.
- Shared mobility services include on-demand rideshare service, vanpool incentives, and a Guaranteed Ride Home program. Few residents or employees are aware of these opportunities.

Parking Supply and Demand

Downtown Study Area

- The downtown study area contains approximately 1,800 parking spaces, including:
 - Approximately 800 public on-street spaces
 - Approximately 1,000 private off-street spaces¹
- There are currently no designated public parking lots.
- Overall parking occupancy for all on- and off-street spaces in the downtown study area ranged from 12 percent to 18 percent—always well below the 85 percent occupancy target.
- Parking demand was slightly higher on Thursday than on Saturday, and fairly stable throughout each day, without extreme peaks. The highest demand observed was at 9:00 am on Thursday.

¹ This does not include single family home driveways and garages or parking lots with fewer than five spaces.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area

- There were approximately 1,873 existing and “potential” (with no formal curb and/or currently unpaved) street parking spaces along the seven streets in the study area.
 - The majority are potential future spaces where there is a paved roadway but no formal curb.
 - Some are potential future spaces where the roadway is still unpaved.
 - Even along developed curbs, street parking utilization was consistently low.
- Walker sampled off-street parking facility utilization on Thursday between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.
 - A total of 523 vehicles were counted in a total of 878 private off-street parking spaces, for a utilization of 60 percent across the sampled facilities.
 - Most developments provide more than enough off-street parking to meet the typical parking demand of their employees. One large facility experienced some parking and access difficulties, primarily during shift change.

Future Growth and Development

- Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) demographic forecasts estimated that the Desert Hot Springs population could nearly double from 29,390 persons in 2019 to 58,900 persons by 2040.
- Desert Hot Springs’ Regional Housing Needs Assessment for the 2021-2029 planning period was determined by SCAG to be 3,873 housing units. The General Plan states that, as part of a comprehensive development code update, the City will evaluate, and modify if necessary, parking standards to ensure that they do not constrain the development of housing, specifically senior housing and multi-family housing.
- Desert Hot Springs expects economic growth to occur throughout the City, as it strengthens its existing tourism and cannabis industries and looks to attract and retain new businesses, including warehousing/fulfillment centers, health care, professional office uses, and regional-serving retail.
- If new development proceeds without proactive parking strategies in place, the City risks losing an unnecessary portion of its most valuable real estate to surface parking spaces that sit empty much of the time.

Stakeholder and Community Outreach Findings

The study included conversations with key stakeholders and outreach to the general public, including an online community-wide survey, virtual and in-person events, and direct outreach conducted in the study areas.

Key Stakeholder Outreach Findings

- City of Desert Hot Springs staff are actively engaging in efforts to support economic development, including by analyzing relevant lessons learned from other cities.
- SunLine Transit and IE Commuter offer various shared mobility services, and continued efforts to increase awareness of and participation in shared mobility options could reduce parking demand in the city.
- Stakeholders supported parking and zoning strategies that facilitate downtown development and more flexible land use.

- Approximately 70 percent of business licensee survey respondents reported that most of their employees live within Desert Hot Springs.
- Policy solutions focused on bicycle infrastructure and sustainable travel incentives were the most likely to be seen by business licensee survey respondents as “very helpful.”
- Business licensee survey respondents also generally supported the following policy solutions:
 - More flexible parking standards
 - Rideshare matching initiatives or incentives
 - Upgraded transit service
 - Adjustments to SunRide micro transit
 - Shuttles between businesses and other areas of the City

Community Outreach Findings

- The most popular items that Holiday Parade event attendees wanted to see more of were on-street programming, multi-modal streets, and safety improvements. Open-ended comments also focused on safety and active transportation, suggesting more sidewalks in residential areas, safety treatments at intersections for pedestrians, and protected bike lanes.
- Most survey respondents drive themselves as their primary form of transportation, but several use alternative modes for at least some trips, and 25 percent indicated they would be at least “somewhat likely” to switch to an e-bike or scooter for some trips if there were safe infrastructure and secure parking.
- Employees contacted in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area were generally not aware of SunRide micro transit or regional commuter incentive programs.
- For both the Downtown and Industrial Cannabis areas, community members are especially interested in improving street safety.
- Community members seem generally aware that Desert Hot Springs is growing and will need to plan for that growth with adjustments to traffic and parking strategies.

Short-Term and Ongoing Recommendations

Implementation	Rationale	General Plan Support
Strategy 1: Repeal Minimum Parking Requirements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop ordinance updating development code Section 17.48.040. 	<p>Repealing minimum parking requirements streamlines the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and facilitates redevelopment over existing excess surface parking lots. This supports goals for economic development, density, and commercial intensification while also improving the visual character of the downtown. It could also result in more efficient use of the area's existing parking resources.</p>	<p><u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments LU-8.3: Protect Industrial Uses LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-12.10: Visual Character</p> <p><u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies MI-10.2: Expand Funding</p> <p><u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-2.2: Economic Development ED-2.3: Streamline Permit Process</p>
Strategy 2: Facilitate Shared/Public Parking		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify downtown off-street private parking facilities for investment to increase the supply of parking that is publicly managed and available. Develop a plan for cannabis area street parking safety improvements. Conduct outreach, develop model agreement, and promote shared use agreements among private entities. 	<p>Different land uses often experience peak parking demands at different times of day and days of the week. Shared parking can reduce the amount of parking that needs to be constructed, freeing up land for more businesses, amenities, or public space. Shared parking encourages pedestrian activity by allowing many small parking facilities to be consolidated into larger shared lots, reducing the visual impact of surface parking and making walking more practical and pleasant.</p>	<p><u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization LU-1.7: Infrastructure LU-1.8 Lot Consolidation LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions LU-8.3: Protect Industrial Uses LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-11.2: Cluster Development LU-12.10: Visual Character</p> <p><u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-1.3: Multi-Modal MI-2.6: Rights-of-Way MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies MI-10.2: Expand Funding MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way</p>

Implementation	Rationale	General Plan Support
		<u>Open Space and Natural Resources Element</u> OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals <u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-2.2: Economic Development <u>Health and Wellness Element</u> HW-1.10 Amenities that Promote Healthy Living
Strategy 3: Discourage Unshared Parking		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the development code to establish soft maximum parking allowances (whereby excess parking may be provided only if additional TDM measures are also provided), equal to or based on previous minimum parking requirements in code Section 17.48.040. Create and adopt a Parking and TDM Plan with requirements for the inclusion of TDM measures for new projects that include more unshared parking than allowed under the soft maximums. 	<p>When each business or parcel provides its own parking, the result is often acres of underutilized parking spaces that sit empty much of the time. Right-sizing parking allows more public and private land to be used for economic activity, community amenities, and open space. When developers who wish to provide additional parking must provide similar benefits that will serve those who travel by other modes, this can support goals for community health, social equity, and environmental sustainability.</p>	<u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization LU-1.7: Infrastructure LU-1.8 Lot Consolidation LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions LU-8.3: Protect Industrial Uses LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-11.2: Cluster Development LU-12.10: Visual Character <u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-1.3: Multi-Modal MI-2.6: Rights-of-Way MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies MI-10.2: Expand Funding MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way <u>Open Space and Natural Resources Element</u> OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals <u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-2.2: Economic Development <u>Health and Wellness Element</u> HW-1.10 Amenities that Promote Healthy Living

Implementation	Rationale	General Plan Support
Strategy 4: Allow for Mixed-Use and Infill Development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rezone Residential-Low and Residential-Medium areas of downtown to Mixed-Use Neighborhood. Update the development code to establish a new category, permitting residential uses (limited to upper floors) where such uses were previously not allowed. 	<p>Allowing a mix of uses in an area can improve proximity and access to different places, reducing the distance and segregation between different types of places, making it possible for more trips to be taken without a car. Mixed-use projects that include residential units are often more economically viable to develop, and limiting newly allowed residential uses to upper floors can help ensure that any of the efficiency benefits of concentrating commercial or industrial uses within a designated area will be preserved.</p>	<p><u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-11.2: Cluster Development LU-12.10: Visual Character</p> <p><u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-1.3: Multi-Modal MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies MI-10.2: Expand Funding MI-10.3: Impact Fees</p> <p><u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-1.9: Cannabis Cultivation ED-2.2 Economic Development ED-2.3 Streamline Permit Process</p> <p><u>Open Space and Natural Resources Element</u> OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals</p> <p><u>Health and Wellness Element</u> HW-1.10 Amenities that Promote Healthy Living</p>
Strategy 5: Support Walking, Biking, and Shared Mobility		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Active Transportation Safety and Connectivity Plan. Adopt mode share goals and align budget expenditures. Establish a sustainable mobility impact fee. Create and adopt a Parking and TDM Plan. Promote regional commuter programs. Establish development standards and a plan for bicycle and scooter parking. Explore potential connector routes between downtown and key areas. Explore opportunities to create a mobility hub. 	<p>Desert Hot Springs will get what it builds for, and a transportation strategy that takes “alternative” modes of travel—including walking, biking, e-bikes, electric scooters, neighborhood electric vehicles, transit services, carpooling, and car sharing—seriously today will eventually result in many long-term benefits, including: reduced automobile accidents and fatalities, health and wellness benefits of fresh air and exercise, greater sense of community, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and less traffic congestion, economic vitality and support for local businesses, fiscal sustainability and savings on infrastructure spending,</p>	<p><u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled LU-1.7: Infrastructure LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-12.10: Visual Character</p> <p><u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-1.3: Multi-Modal MI-2.6: Rights-of-Way MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies MI-3.4: Test Street Improvement MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies MI-10.2: Expand Funding MI-10.3: Impact Fees MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way</p> <p><u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-2.2: Economic Development ED-2.3: Streamline Permit Process</p>

Implementation	Rationale	General Plan Support
	access and mobility for those too young, too elderly, too financially constrained, or otherwise unable to drive, financial freedom from the expenses of vehicle ownership, more efficient land use and reduced sprawl, resulting in more affordable housing, opportunities for community amenities, and the preservation of open space.	<u>Open Space and Natural Resources Element</u> OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals <u>Health and Wellness Element</u> HW-1.10 Amenities that Promote Healthy Living

Longer-Term Strategy Recommendations

Implementation	Rationale	General Plan Support
Strategy 1: Manage Public Parking Based on Demand		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informally monitor street parking occupancy to see whether utilization rates ever seem to regularly exceed 85 percent. If warranted by congested parking, conduct an initial parking occupancy study. Develop a management plan that may include time limits, demand-based pricing, and/or permits. Continually monitor occupancy and adjust time limits or pricing as necessary to achieve parking availability. 	<p>Many successful business districts and densely developed areas eventually find that parking occupancies naturally come to exceed an 85 percent threshold in prime locations, and strategies must be developed to maintain parking availability. Keeping a few spaces available on each block keeps visitors from having to circle to find a space—saving time, preventing superfluous emissions, allowing people to arrive on-time for appointments and work, and ensuring potential visitors do not decide to go elsewhere due to a lack of convenient parking.</p>	<u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-12.10: Visual Character <u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-1.3: Multi-Modal MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies MI-10.2: Expand Funding MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way <u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-1.9: Cannabis Cultivation ED-2.2: Economic Development
Strategy 2: Invest in New Parking Technologies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If additional parking management becomes necessary in the future, explore options and conduct outreach with local business owners, community members, and City staff 	<p>If the City's parking management becomes more complex in the future, it is well-worth exploring the technology solutions available to create a user-friendly experience and save staff time on administration and enforcement.</p>	<u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.8 Lot Consolidation LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions

Implementation	Rationale	General Plan Support
<p>members to determine which technologies best meet their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider options such as pay-by-plate technologies, Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) enforcement equipment, smart sensors, and mobile apps. 		LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-11.2: Cluster Development <u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization MI-10.2: Expand Funding MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way <u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-2.2: Economic Development
Strategy 3: Create a Parking Benefit District		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct stakeholder outreach with the business community. Establish preliminary district boundaries. Establish district membership. Determine the type of governing body (e.g., commission, advisory board, etc.) Establish roles and responsibilities. Determine authority and options for parking revenue allocation. Schedule regular meetings. 	<p>When the business community and resident stakeholders have an active role in identifying parking issues, needs, and opportunities, making decisions, and allocating parking revenue for local programs or projects, this helps ensure that public spaces are managed in a way that most benefits the community, and it helps generate buy-in and support for parking management.</p>	<u>Land Use Element</u> LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns LU-12.10: Visual Character <u>Mobility and Infrastructure Element</u> MI-1.3: Multi-Modal MI-2.6: Rights-of-Ways MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies MI-3.4: Test Street Improvement MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies MI-9.4: Special Assessments MI-10.2: Expand Funding MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way <u>Economic Development Element</u> ED-2.2: Economic Development <u>Open Space and Natural Resources Element</u> OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals <u>Health and Wellness Element</u> HW-1.10 Amenities that Promote Healthy Living
Strategy 4: Prepare to Manage Parking with Dedicated Staff		
<p>As Desert Hot Springs grows, and both the Downtown and Industrial Cannabis District are further developed, parking planning and enforcement capabilities for on- and potentially off-street parking will be needed. Ultimately, Walker recommends that additional staff who are dedicated to ensuring parking functionality and regulation compliance monitor parking conditions in the City, enforce parking restrictions, and interface with private parking owners to work on a collaborative approach to providing parking.</p>		



01 Introduction

Introduction

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the City of Desert Hot Springs engaged Walker Consultants (“Walker”) to conduct a Parking Management Study to analyze current parking and access needs and opportunities in the City and plan for future growth. The report includes an overview of the existing parking and access conditions, a summary of the outreach and engagement conducted, and final recommendations for parking management that align with the City’s goals as stated in the General Plan.

SCAG Support

This project is supported by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for six counties in Southern California, including Riverside County. The funding comes from SCAG’s Sustainable Communities Program (SCP), which is a vehicle for promoting local jurisdictional efforts to test local planning tools. The SCP also serves as the primary funding mechanism where SCAG partners with local agencies to implement goals, objectives and strategies for Connect SoCal, the agency’s regional plan. These strategies aim to achieve an integrated regional development pattern that reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and that supports SCAG’s equity-focused initiatives.

Within the SCP, SCAG’s Smart Cities & Mobility Innovations (SCMI) projects support the implementation of the agency’s long-range planning efforts: Smart Cities & Job Centers, Go Zones, and Shared Mobility/Mobility as a Service. These “Key Connections” focus on advancing expanded mobility ecosystems and management strategies using innovative policy and/or technology to realize regional planning goals. Goals of the SCMI include:

- To create dynamic, connected, built environments that support multimodal mobility, reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles, and reduce VMT.
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality by reducing driving alone, idling, or searching for parking.
- To support healthy and equitable communities by allocating public resources like curbspace more equitably.
- To encourage shared modes, manage parking effectively, and support commerce and the growth of housing and employment in job centers.
- To mitigate impacts from transportation.

By pursuing grant funding through the SCP, the City of Desert Hot Springs sought to analyze parking and access conditions and develop management strategies that support both local and regional planning goals.

Report Outline



Setting

Desert Hot Springs is in Riverside County, California, within the Coachella Valley geographic region, southeast of State Route 62 and northeast of Interstate 10. The City is located between the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountain ranges in the Colorado Desert region of the Sonoran Desert, near Joshua Tree National Park (see Figure 1). The climate of the area generally includes high winds, low precipitation, hot summers, and mild winters.

Figure 1: City of Desert Hot Springs Context Map



Source: Aerial Image - Google Earth, 2023.

The City has experienced rapid growth, having approximately doubled in population since the 2000 Census, to its current population estimate of approximately 33,091 (United States Census Bureau, 2022). The City's economy relies heavily on industrial cannabis activity and tourism, in part due to the area's natural hot springs.

Purpose of the Study

As noted in the scope of services for this engagement, the City of Desert Hot Springs sought to develop a parking management plan encompassing the commercial and light industrial hubs of the City to facilitate new development and provide mobility options accommodating to all users. The project study areas are currently characterized by inconsistent parking strategies and limited by parking standards which hinder efficient use of developable space for commercial, residential, and/or light industrial use. The plan is intended to provide consistent parking standards and the framework to deploy innovative practices to meet future development and mobility demand through data collection, parking management, curb innovation, and Compete Streets strategies.

Study Areas

This project focused on two study areas where the City would like to facilitate new development: (1) the downtown area and (2) the industrial cannabis area. In addition to studying publicly available street parking, Walker also made observations at many of the larger private off-street parking facilities, to understand how private parking supplies were being utilized within the study areas.

Downtown Study Area

The Downtown Study Area (see Figure 2) centers around Pierson Boulevard, bounded by Cholla Drive to the west and Mesquite Avenue to the east. It extends one block north to 1st Street, between West Drive and Mesquite Avenue, and one block south to Acoma Avenue, between Cholla Drive and Mesquite Avenue. This study area includes ten blocks total. Pierson Boulevard is lined with businesses and institutions, with properties that occasionally extend to First Street and Acoma Avenue. Most of the other properties along First Street and Acoma Avenue are single family homes.

Figure 2: Downtown Study Area Boundaries

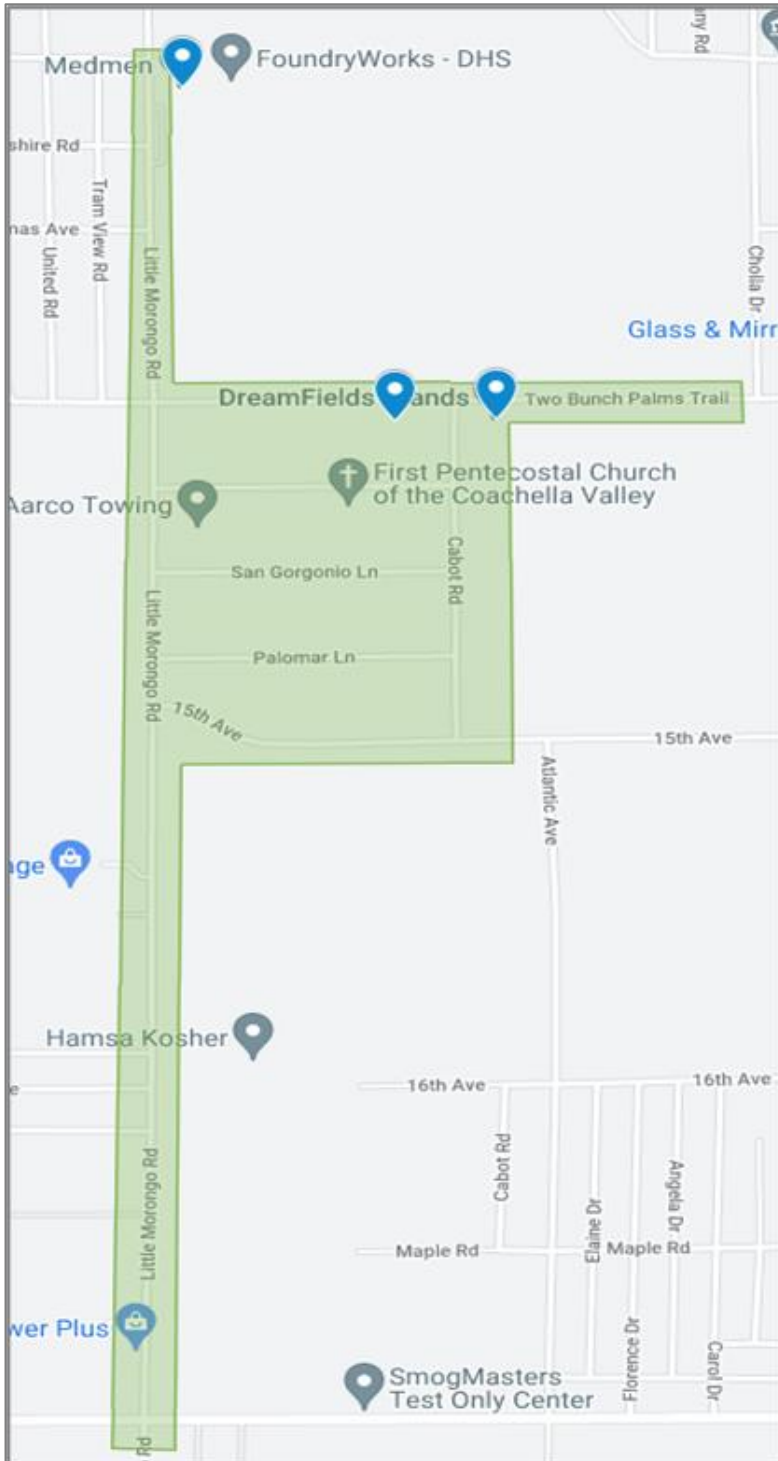


Source: Walker Consultants and Google Maps, 2023.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area

The Industrial Cannabis Study Area (see Figure 3) is within the City’s Industrial Cannabis Overlay. The primary study area streets are Little Morongo Road between 13th Avenue and Dillon Road, Two Bunch Palms Trail between Little Morongo Road and Cholla Drive, all of San Jacinto Lane, and all of Cabot Road. The study area also includes three streets that have yet to be paved or see much development—San Gorgonio Lane, Palomar Lane, and 15th Avenue.

Figure 3: Industrial Cannabis Study Area Boundaries



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs and Google Maps, 2023.



02 Planning Context

Planning Context

This Planning Context chapter provides an overview of the existing planning goals and policies, zoning and land use information, development standards, and regulations. It also provides an overview of the City's current and planned multimodal transportation options that relate to access and parking demand. Finally, it concludes with relevant demographics and a discussion of how current citywide growth forecasts may affect the study areas in the future.

The Planning Context findings will inform recommended options for parking management in the project study areas. The recommendations will also consider how parking planning and management can help support the goals of economic resilience, health and equity in transportation and land use, and the reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. The background information in this chapter will help ensure that the strategies presented account for the local context and planning vision in Desert Hot Springs.

Relevant Planning Goals and Policies

Desert Hot Springs's General Plan, adopted in 2020, already contains many goals and policies related to parking and access in several of its plan elements, including Land Use and Community Design, Mobility and Infrastructure, Economic Development, Open Space and Natural Resources, and Health and Wellness. Additionally, Desert Hot Springs adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2013 that contains goals for sustainable transportation and actions to be implemented. Reviewing existing goals and policies will help ensure the recommendations in this report are made to align with the City's goals.

Land Use and Community Design Element

- **LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.
- **LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization.** Encourage revitalization of underutilized and vacant infill properties within the City closest to available infrastructure and community services.
- **LU-1.7: Infrastructure.** Ensure that infrastructure is integrated into the community concurrently with new development projects.
- **LU-1.8: Lot Consolidation.** Encourage lot consolidation and utilize land assembly strategies and incentives to promote compatible infill developments.
- **LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor.** Allow higher-density and mixed uses along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage shopping, services, and entertainment amenities in closer proximity to established infrastructure and transit services.

- **Policy LU-3.1: Commercial Services.** Ensure that zoning regulations allow for a full range of commercial services, retail activity, and entertainment and restaurant uses.
- **Policy LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification.** Encourage the intensification of commercial uses on underutilized and vacant commercial properties within Downtown and along the Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive corridors.
- **Policy LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources.** Maximize revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources.
- **Policy LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments.** Accommodate outdoor cafes and neighborhood-serving uses as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and commercial center vitality.
- **Policy LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions.** Allow mixed-use developments to utilize shared parking plans, park once and walk districts, and other innovative and flexible parking strategies.
- **Policy LU-8.3: Protect Industrial Uses.** Limit non-industrial uses within industrially designated areas to protect the viability of those areas for industrial businesses.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development.** Prioritize business attraction and retention of employment and revenue-generating uses on industrial land.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-11.2: Cluster Development.** Encourage proposed projects within designated conservation areas to cluster development to provide for the greatest amount of conservation while respecting surrounding established and planned uses.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element

- **Policy MI-1.3: Multi-Modal.** Aim to develop a multimodal and/or multipurpose approach when implementing infrastructure outlined in the Mobility Plan.
- **Policy MI-2.6: Rights-of-Ways.** Use available public rights-of-ways to provide wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trail facilities, and transit amenities.
- **Policy MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization.** Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- **Policy MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies.** Repurpose underused roadway space for safety, mobility, and public space improvements using low-cost, temporary solutions.
- **Policy MI-3.4: Test Street Improvement.** Install temporary, low-cost materials to test street improvement ideas prior to incorporating permanent designs for successful projects.

- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.
- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-9.4: Special Assessments.** Support special assessment districts for street and traffic improvements.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.
- **Policy MI-10.3: Impact Fees.** Ensure that impact fees provide adequate funding for necessary transportation improvements that will benefit all travel modes, while also incentivizing development that is less dependent on expensive, new transportation.
- **Policy MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way.** Seek opportunities to integrate mobility and infrastructure planning, particularly to efficiently use rights-of-way.

Economic Development Element

- **Policy ED-1.9 Cannabis Cultivation.** Develop a comprehensive strategy to position the City as the premier center for cannabis cultivation and production businesses and enterprises that support/complement the developing cannabis industry in the Coachella Valley.
- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.
- **Policy ED-2.3: Streamline Permit Process.** Maintain a development permitting process that provides clarity, consistency, and assistance opportunities for new businesses and existing businesses looking to expand.

Open Space and Natural Resources Element

- **Policy OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals.** Ensure that land use and transportation plans support regional air quality goals, with new development projects reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.

Health and Wellness Element

- **Policy HW-1.10: Amenities that Promote Healthy Living.** Encourage developments to provide access, facilities, and amenities that connect to trails, encourage walking, and/or provide for other facilities that promote healthy living.

Climate Action Plan (2013) – GHG Reduction Measures

- **Car-Pooling and Mass Transit:** Promote “Shared Vehicle at Work” programs to increase carpooling and mass transit by 20% with a “guaranteed ride home.”
- **Buses:** Promote the benefits of buses to increase ridership by 130%, provide promotions and incentives for new riders.
- **Bike, Walking, NEV Parkway:** Support Parkway 1e11 as a Valley amenity and means to alternative forms of transportation and to promote health in Desert Hot Springs.
- **Reduce Retail Leakage:** Encourage reduction in VMT and “retail leakage” through the Economic Development Strategic Plan to attract more businesses such as Wal-Mart to the City.
- **Bus Route Maximization:** Collaborate with SunLine officials to reform routes to promote smaller buses with more routes and frequencies to increase ridership by 50%.
- **Van Pools:** Partner and recognize all DHS major employers with over 50 employees for van pools.
- **Car Sharing:** Promote ZIP and/or other car share programs through preferential parking and promotion with signage to serve 5% of existing drivers who each reduce their driving by 25%.
- **Transit Oriented Development:** Promote transit oriented development to foster development in line with mass transit corridors.
- **Visitor Shuttles:** Collaborate with local hotels and resorts to establish effective point-to-point transportation for visitors, e.g. shuttles to airport, hotels, business district.
- **Neighborhood Electric Vehicles:** Design and promote Neighborhood Electric Vehicle program to achieve minimum of 400 NEVs for Desert Hot Springs residents and visitors.

Zoning, Land Use, and Development Standards

Downtown Study Area Zoning

Zoning districts in the downtown study area (see map in Figure 4) include:

- **Commercial – General,** along Pierson Boulevard between West Drive and Cactus Drive
- **Commercial – Downtown,** along Pierson Boulevard between Cactus Drive and Mesquite Avenue
- **Mixed Use – Neighborhood,** on the south side of 1st Street and north side of Acoma Avenue
- **Residential – Low,** on a portion of the north side of 1st Street and a portion of the south side of Acoma Avenue
- **Residential – Medium,** on a portion of the north side of 1st Street and a portion of the south side of Acoma Avenue

Both the **Commercial – General** and **Commercial – Downtown** zoning districts have a maximum floor area ratio of 0.30 and a maximum building height of 35 feet. Section 17.12.070 offers a bonus height incentive for developments with certain features, such as providing pedestrian amenities or additional parking, but residential uses are not currently permitted use in these zoning districts.

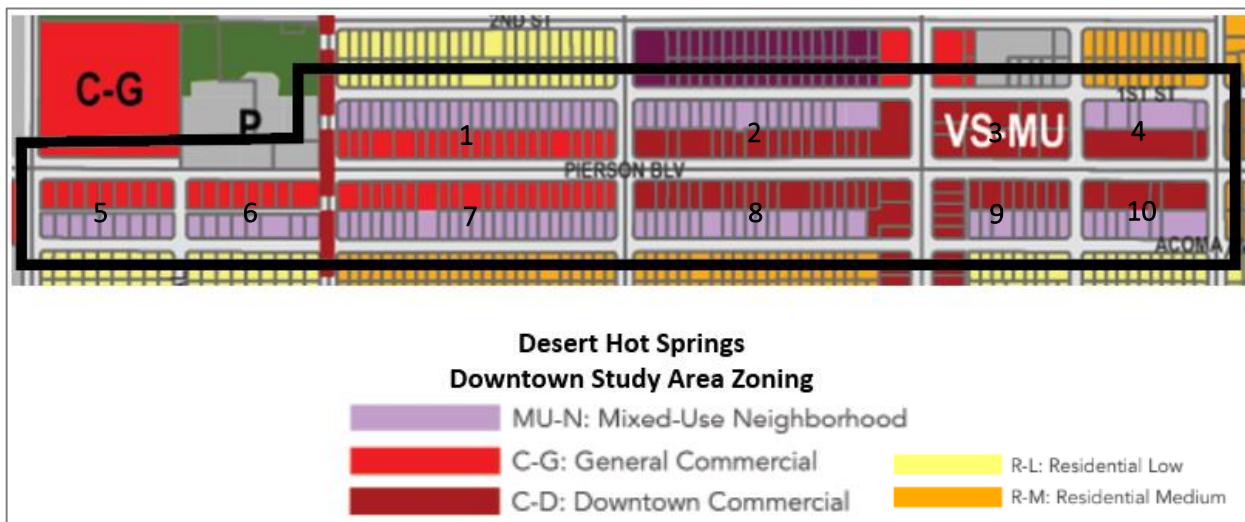
Section 17.12.290 contains parking and circulation guidelines for the commercial zoning districts. The guidelines consider pedestrian safety, landscaping, and visual impact of off-street parking facilities. They recommend providing angled parking and shared parking whenever possible.

The **Mixed Use-Neighborhood** zoning district has a maximum residential density of 15 residential dwelling units per acre and a maximum floor area ratio of 1.00 for nonresidential uses. Building heights are allowed to be up to three stories. Section 17.14.060 states that it should be convenient for people to walk between various uses parking only once and that commercial parking lots in the mixed use zone should be located to the rear of buildings.

The **Residential – Medium** zoning district has a maximum density of twenty residential dwelling units per acre.

The **Residential – Low** zoning district has a maximum density of six residential dwelling units per acre.

Figure 4: Downtown Study Area Zoning Map



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, 2023.

Replica Data – Downtown Building Use Area Estimates

To gather relevant information for the downtown study area land use, Walker consulted Replica data, a proprietary data set that provides data related to mobility, land use, people, and economic activity from location-based mobile apps, connected vehicles, and demographic data from public and private sources.

According to Replica data, approximately 197,000 square feet, or 36 percent of the land in the downtown study area is currently used for single-family residences. Approximately 95,000 square feet, or 18 percent, is used for multi-family residences. There are currently 250,600 square feet, or slightly less than half of the downtown building area, occupied by non-residential buildings, including restaurants, retail, professional services, funeral parlors, offices, religious institutions, and City Hall. Some of these buildings are currently vacant.

Table 1 below displays Replica summary data with estimates of existing building uses and square footage within the downtown study area. Appendix A includes exploratory calculations and discussion of the potential for additional downtown commercial build-out in the future.

Table 1: Current Building Square Footage by Use in the Downtown Study Area

Building Use	Area (square feet)	% of Total
Single-Family Residential	197,000	36%
Retail	103,000	19%
Multi-Family Residential	95,000	18%
Office	84,000	15%
Non-Retail Attraction	42,700	8%
Other Categories	20,900	4%
Total	542,600	100%

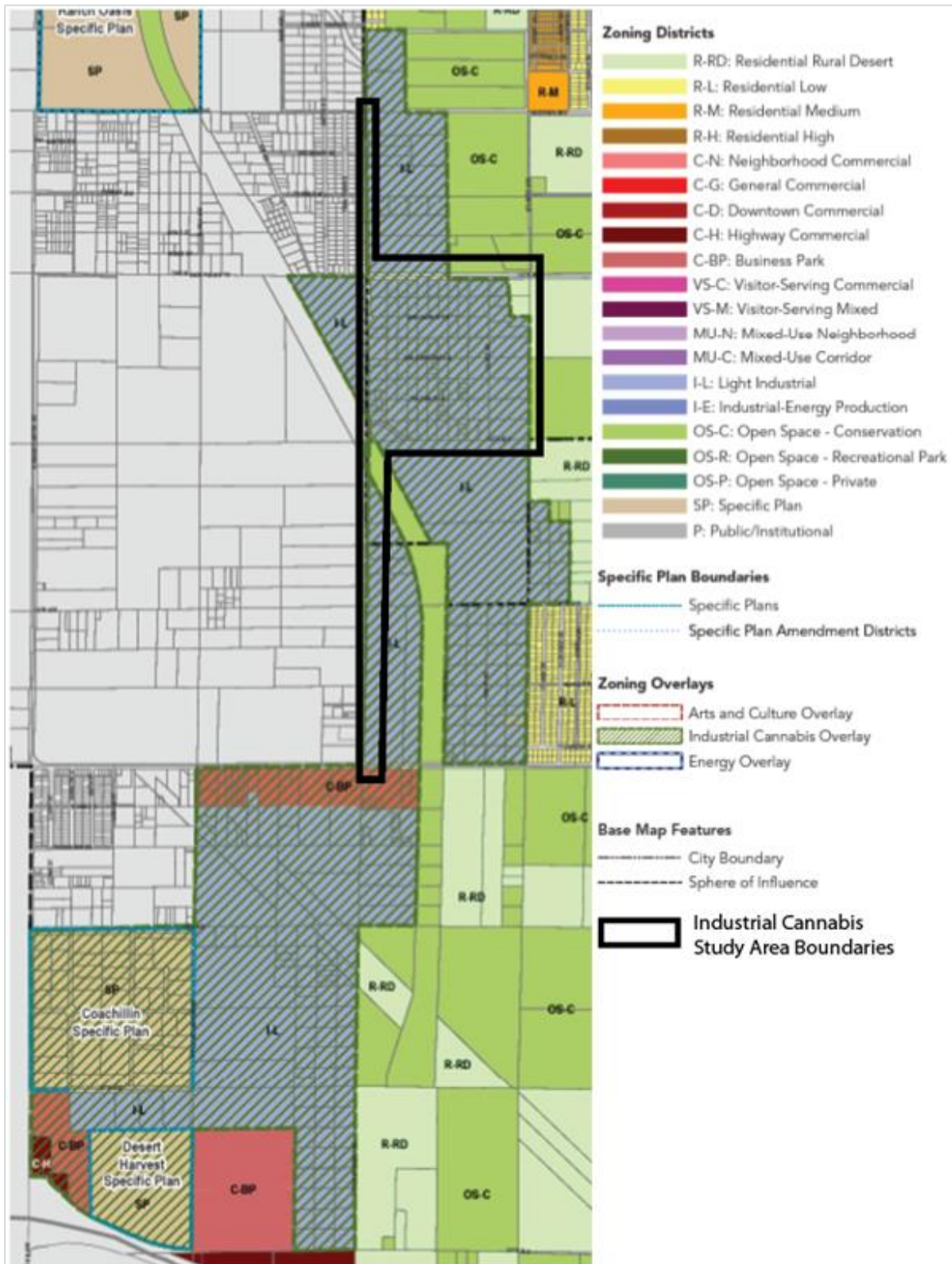
Source: Data – Replica, 2023. Table and calculations - Walker Consultants, 2023.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area Zoning and Land Use

As shown in Figure 5 on page 30, zoning in the industrial cannabis study area is primarily **Light-Industrial**, with an **Industrial Cannabis Overlay**. At the east end of the study area, just west of Cholla Drive, there is also some Open Space-Conservation zoning north of Two Bunch Palms and Residential-Rural Desert zoning south of Two Bunch Palms. There are currently approximately 575,000 square feet of industrial cannabis developments throughout the Industrial Cannabis Overlay area (including outside of this project’s study area). Appendix A includes exploratory calculations and discussion of the potential for additional industrial cannabis development in the future.

Section 17.16.180 establishes parking and circulation guidelines for the industrial district. The guidelines consider pedestrian safety, efficiency, landscaping, and the visual impact of off-street parking facilities. They state that industrial sites should be self-contained developments capable of accommodating their own parking needs; the use of the public street for parking and staging of trucks is not allowed. The zoning ordinance does not include any specific standards or guidelines for the Industrial Cannabis Overlay.

Figure 5: Industrial Cannabis Study Area Zoning Map



Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, 2023.

Off-Street Parking Requirements

Section 17.48.040 of the municipal code establishes off-street parking requirements for different land uses.

Parking requirements for multifamily residential buildings are as follows:

Studio and 1 bedroom	1.5 covered and 1 uncovered guest space for every 5 units
2 bedrooms	2.0 covered and 1 uncovered guest space for every 5 units
3 or more bedrooms	2.5 covered and 1 uncovered guest space for every 5 units

The code also includes specific parking requirements for 34 unique commercial land uses. The following provides a sample of the off-street parking requirements for commercial uses:

Banks, savings and loans, financial	1 space for each 200 sf of gfa, plus 1 lane for each drive-up window and/or automatic teller machine with 6 vehicles per lane
Barber shop/beauty parlor	2 spaces for each barber chair; 3 spaces for each beautician station
Offices, general gfa up to 2,000 sf 2,001 to 7,500 sf 7,501 to 40,000 sf 40,001 sf and greater	1 space for each 200 sf 1 space for each 250 sf 1 space for each 300 sf 1 space for each 350 sf
Restaurants, cafes, bars and other eating and drinking establishments (gfa includes outdoor seating/eating area)	1 space per 75 sf of gfa including indoor and outdoor seating areas
Delicatessen/donut shop	1 space per 150 sf of gfa
Retail commercial	1 space for each 250 sf of gfa
All other commercial uses	1 space for each 200 sf of gfa and not listed above

Parking requirements established for industrial uses are as follows:

Auto dismantling, junk yards, recycling centers	1 space for each 300 sf of gross building area, plus 1 space for every 10,000 sf of gross yard area
Mini-storage	7 spaces
Industrial warehousing	1 space per 750 sf of gfa

Although not clearly established by code, in practice, the parking requirement for industrial cannabis developments has been a blended requirement based on:

- 1 space per 2,500 sf of cultivation area
- 1 space per 750 sf of cannabis manufacturing, testing, extraction, distribution, and packaging space
- 1 space per 250 sf of office space

Chapter 17.48 also contains handicapped parking requirements, parking design standards, and regulations governing off-site parking, shared parking, and tandem parking:

- **Handicapped parking:** The code requires handicapped spaces be provided according to the State of California's requirements, based on the total number of parking spaces.
- **Design standards:** The code establishes design standards for landscaping, shading, lighting, and slope of off-street parking facilities, as well as minimum aisle widths and stall widths and depths for various parking angles.
- **Off-site parking:** Unless otherwise approved by the review authority, required parking spaces must be located on the same parcel as the structure or use, and spaces for multifamily residential developments must be located within 150 feet from the dwelling unit (front or rear door) for which the parking space is provided.
- **Shared parking:** Shared parking may be approved if multiple uses cooperatively establish and operate the facilities and if the uses generate parking demands primarily during hours when the remaining uses are not in operation. The number of spaces must meet the greater parking demand of the participating uses, and additional documents may be required to ensure that the conditions enabling the parking to be shared will continue to apply for the life of the commercial/industrial development.
- **Tandem parking:** Tandem parking (for a maximum of 10 percent of the required parking spaces) may be approved only for commercial or industrial developments required to provide 150 or more parking spaces, and only if an attendant is on duty during the hours the development is open for business.

Parking and Transportation Demand Management Regulations and Enforcement

Desert Hot Springs has several typical regulations in Chapter 10.16 (Stopping, Standing, and Parking) of the municipal code governing parking. Examples of these regulations include allowing the establishment of no parking areas, prohibiting street parking for more than 72 hours, prohibiting parking in designated fire lanes, and prohibiting parking for the purpose of displaying a vehicle for sale or rent. The Police Department may respond to parking complaint calls for service but generally does not do proactive parking enforcement.

The code also gives the City Traffic Engineer authority to establish:

- Green curb markings to designate areas with parking time limits of 3, 10, 20, or 40 minutes, with the length of the limit stenciled into the curb.
- Authorized signs, parking meters or curb markings prohibiting parking longer than one hour.
- Authorized signs, parking meters or curb markings prohibiting parking longer than two hours.

Parking time limits, one hour parking, and two hour parking may be enforced between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on any day except Sundays and holidays. **The City does not currently have any parking time limits in effect,**

nor does it employ any of the following parking management strategies: paid parking, unbundled parking, maximum parking allowances, permit parking, parking in-lieu fees, or parking cash-out.

Transportation demand management is addressed only to the extent required by state law, for large non-residential developments. Chapter 10.56 establishes transportation demand management (TDM) plan requirements. Developments that will employ 100 or more people must submit a TDM plan with the goal of achieving a vehicle occupancy rate of 1.5. The plan must include strategies and guidelines to reduce the number of trips and increase the amount of nonvehicular transportation. Plans may include the provision of transit facilities, bicycle facilities, rideshare facilities, alternate work schedules, an information center for transportation alternatives, contributions to fund providing regional transportation facilities, incentives for mass transit usage, contributions for affordable housing closer to the employer, shuttle programs, golf cart circulation programs, bicycle lane provision, and parking fee implementation. Enforcement is the purview of the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Multimodal Transportation Options

Parking demand can be influenced by the availability of alternatives to single occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel, such as walking, biking, carpooling, using neighborhood electric vehicles, and riding public transit. As cities grow, they often seek to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and increase the share of trips taken by these other modes. Prioritizing and promoting multimodal transportation can improve public health and safety, promote social equity, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce the land area dedicated for vehicle storage, and improve economic vitality and resilience. In Desert Hot Springs, several regional transportation services exist that give residents and visitors the option to travel by modes that are more sustainable than driving alone, and the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan includes improvements that will create new options and help shape travel behavior in the future. Current and planned multimodal transportation options are summarized below.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities and Planning

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The Desert Hot Springs Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was developed in 2016 with the goal of creating a connected bicycle and pedestrian network. The plan provides injury and fatality statistics, identifies existing active transportation infrastructure in the City, and recommends improvements based on travel demand, safety, and equity. Recommendations were informed by community input through workshops in both English and Spanish.

Workshop participants identified the streets they walked or biked on the most as Dillon Road, Hacienda Avenue, Mesquite Avenue, Mountain View Road, Pierson Boulevard and Two Bunch Palms Trail. A participant survey also revealed the biggest barriers to walking or biking to be the lack of sidewalks and bike lanes, poor lighting, and high vehicle speeds (see Figure 6 on page 34).

Figure 6: Top Barriers to Walking and Biking in Desert Hot Springs



Source: *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2016.*

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identifies priorities for new bicycle facilities that will increase connectivity between existing facilities and throughout the City (see Figure 8 on page 36). The plan also highlights future connections to CV Link, a 50-mile bicycle, pedestrian, and low-speed electric vehicle pathway with construction already underway, along the Whitewater River between Palm Springs and Coachella. The future Desert Hot Springs Regional Extension route will connect people from the Gene Autry Trail and I-10, via Class II bicycle lanes connecting to Palm Drive and Dillon Road (see Figure 9 on page 37).

The City of Desert Hot Springs has also applied for grant funding to develop an Active Transportation Safety and Connectivity Plan, which would incorporate and update the 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Street Improvement Projects Underway

Desert Hot Springs is currently in the process of making street improvements that will improve conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians along two of the City’s main streets, Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

Palm Drive - from Two Bunch Palms Trail to Pierson Boulevard

Palm Drive is an important connector between the Downtown study area and the industrial cannabis study area. Desert Hot Springs plans to improve conditions along this route by installing new streetlights, new crosswalks (including at Two Bunch Palms), and white stripe bike lanes from Acoma Avenue to Two Bunch Palms with a “bike sharrow” or shared lane marking, between Acoma Avenue and Pierson Boulevard.

Pierson Boulevard – from Golden Eagle Way to Verbena Drive

Pierson Boulevard is the main street of the City’s downtown area. Plans for Pierson Boulevard include new bike ways, raised pedestrian crosswalks to allow for easier crossing of long blocks, and angled parking in the center of the street, offset from crosswalks by landscaping. The planned improvement covers the segment from Golden Eagle Way on the west to Verbena Drive on the east (see Figure 7 on page 35). The project plan includes:

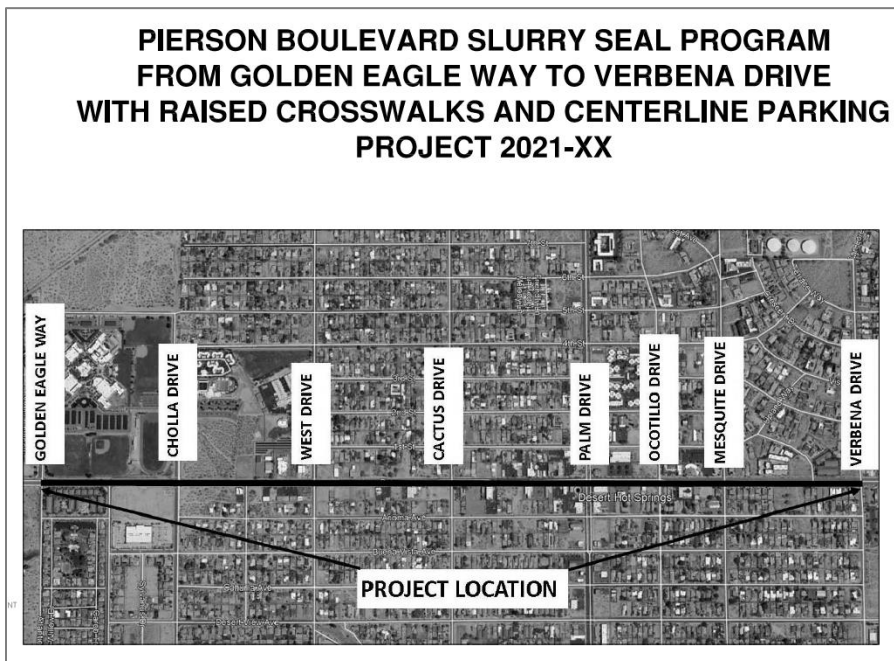
- Bicycle facilities
 - Golden Eagle Way to West Drive – white stripe bike lanes
 - West Drive to Mesquite Drive – bike sharrows
 - Mesquite Drive to Verbena Drive – no bicycle facilities

- Raised crosswalks
 - 3 between West Drive and Cactus Drive
 - 3 between Cactus Drive and Palm Drive
 - 1 between Palm Drive and Ocotillo Drive
 - 1 between Ocotillo Drive and Mesquite Drive

- Angled parking in the center (offset from crosswalk by landscaping)
 - 22 spaces between West Drive and Cactus Drive
 - 18 spaces between Cactus Drive and Palm Drive
 - 0 spaces between Palm Drive and Ocotillo Drive
 - 14 spaces between Ocotillo Drive and Mesquite Drive

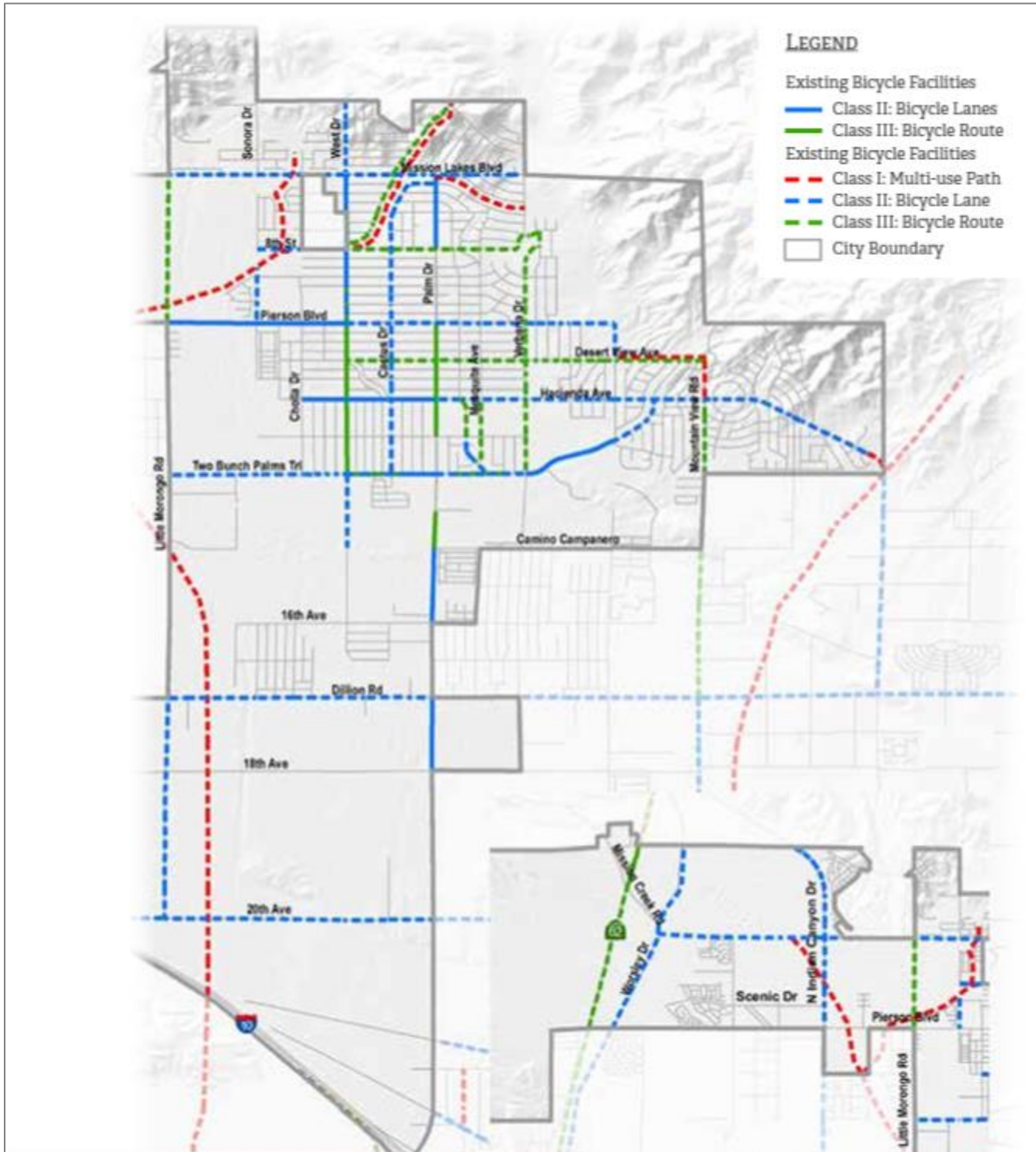
- Installation of City logos at Palm Drive/Pierson Boulevard intersection

Figure 7: Pierson Boulevard Project Location



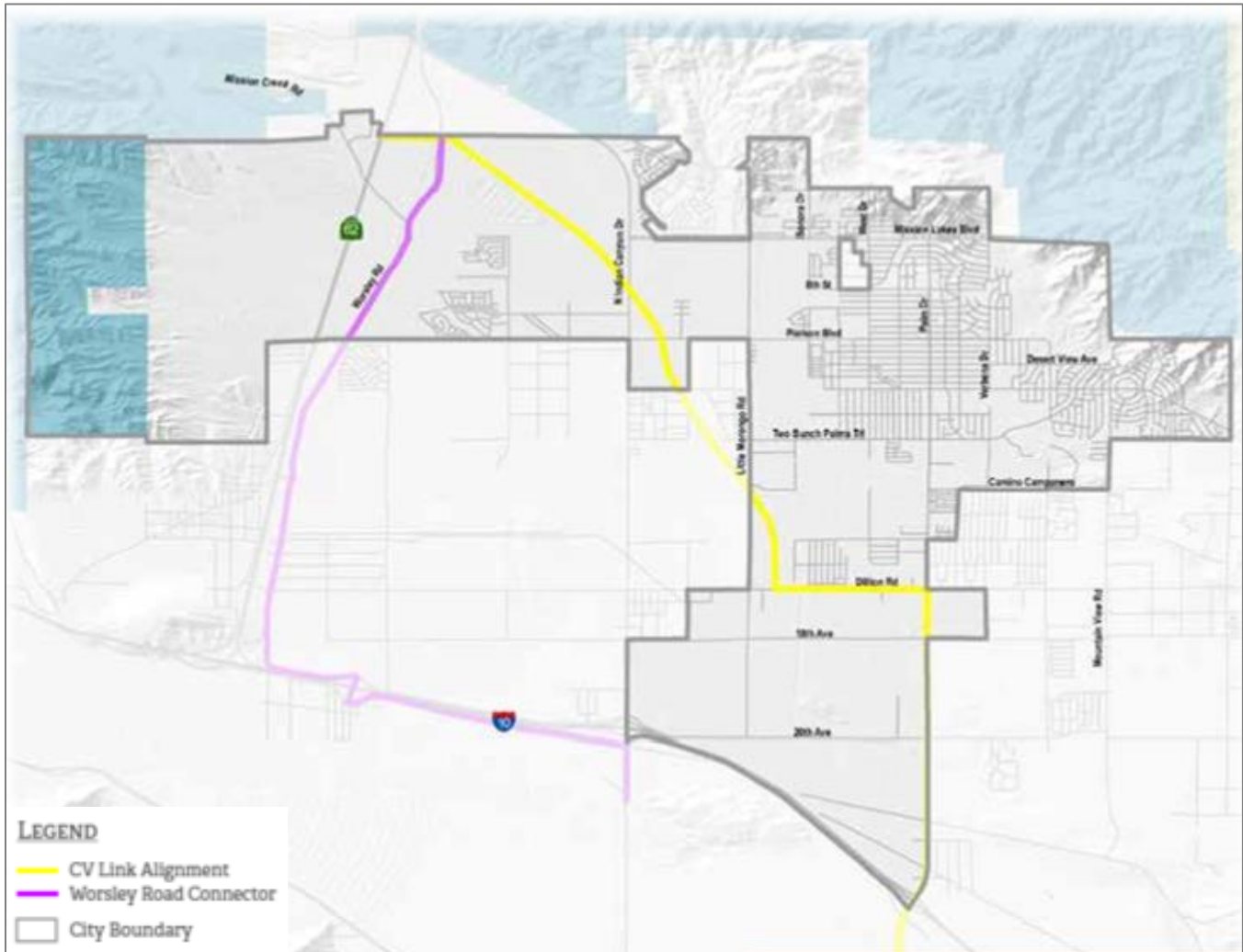
Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, 2022.

Figure 8: Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities in Desert Hot Springs



Source: *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2016.*

Figure 9: CV Link’s Desert Hot Springs Regional Extension



Source: *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2016.*

Shared Mobility Services

SunLine Transit Services

Desert Hot Springs is served by the SunLine Transit Agency, which offers fixed route bus service, dial-a-ride service, and commuter programs that connect Riverside County. Additional programs exist for seniors, persons with disabilities, and high school, CSUSB-PD, and College of the Desert students.

SunBus

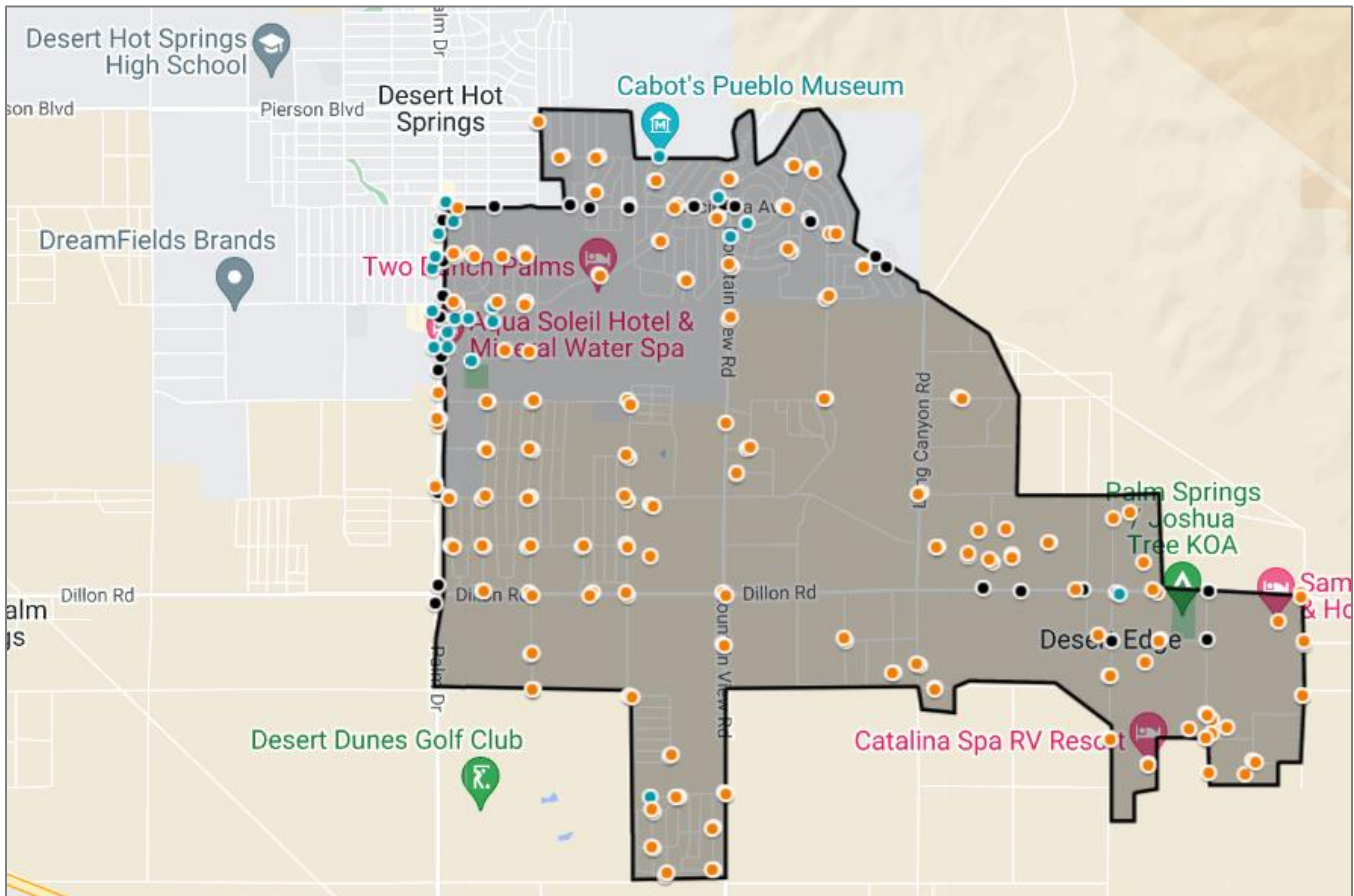
The fixed route service, SunBus, currently has nine fixed routes, three of which go through Desert Hot Springs. All three routes travel along Pierson Boulevard and also pass by the intersection of Palm Drive and Two Bunch Palms Trail. Route 2 runs approximately every hour and connects Desert Hot Springs with Palm Springs and Cathedral City to the south, via Palm Drive (see Figure 11 on page 39). Route 3 also runs approximately every hour and connects

Desert Hot Springs with Desert Edge to the east, via Hacienda Avenue (see Figure 11 on page 39). Route 5 connects Desert Hot Springs with Palm Desert to the southeast, via I-10 (see Figure 11 on page 39). It operates only on weekdays, running three times in the morning and three times in the evening. All buses offer free WiFi and are equipped with bike racks. Riders can purchase passes virtually via the Token Transit app, or in person at Desert Market on Palm Drive.

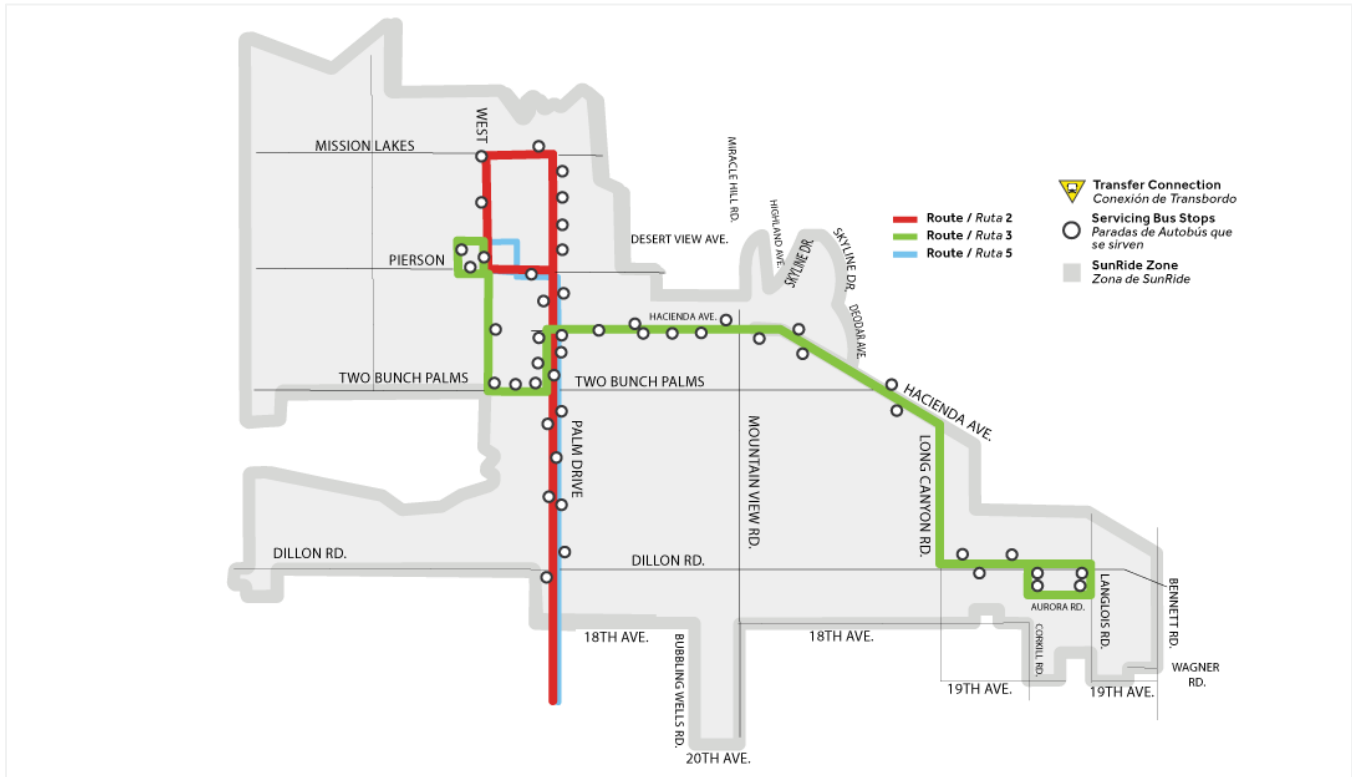
SunRide

SunLine Transit Agency began offering on-demand rideshare through the SunRide program in September 2022. SunRide connects passengers to local fixed routes or other stops in a specified zone. Passengers may schedule rides and pay with the SunRide app, up to seven days in advance. The service operates Monday through Friday between 5:30 am and 6:30 pm. The average wait time is 15 minutes. The fare is three dollars and includes a transfer to fixed routes. In Desert Hot Springs, the SunRide zone was initially only to the east of Palm Drive (see Figure 10), but the coverage area was recently expanded (see Figure 11 on page 39) west to Little Morongo Road and north of Pierson beyond Mission Lakes Boulevard, so the majority of the developed portion of the City is within the zone, including large employers in the industrial cannabis study area.

Figure 10: Prior SunRide Transit Zone Flex Stops, Points of Interest, and Fixed Route Transfer Points



Source: SunLine Transit Agency, 2022.

Figure 11: Expanded SunRide Zone and Fixed Route Transfer Points


Source: SunLine Transit Agency, 2023.

SunCommute

SunLine Transit Agency also offers educational resources and commuter incentives. SunLine provides materials, meetings, and workshops to employee transportation coordinators and provides staff for presentations to commuters. The agency also offers free trial bus passes and has an employer bus pass program with monthly bus passes available to employers for \$24, compared to the regular price of \$34. Employers may then subsidize any portion of the pass for their employees. This can be a tax-free benefit for employers, a pre-tax benefit for employees, or both, if an employer provides a partial subsidy.

IE Commuter Programs

IE Commuter is a program of the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority. The program helps employers of all sizes set up customized rideshare programs at no cost to the employer. The program also provides commuters with incentives, information, and services that encourage commuters to consider alternatives to driving alone.

Rideshare Incentives and Guaranteed Ride Home Program

IE Commuter offers monthly drawings, as well as a \$5 gift card per day rideshare incentive for employees who carpool or vanpool at least five days a month for three or more consecutive months. IE Commuter also offers a Guaranteed Ride Home program, which provides Lyft/Uber or other travel reimbursement for commuters who use rideshare to get to work but may have to leave early due to an emergency or stay late to work unexpected overtime.

SolVan Vanpool

Other services include carpool or vanpool matching and personalized bus or train routing assistance. IE Commuter partners with SunLine Transit to offer the SolVan program, a vanpool incentive program for groups of 5 to 15 people, which provides a 50 percent subsidy of up to \$400-500 per month to offset the cost of a van lease through a qualified leasing vendor. Vanpool is marketed as a way to save money by splitting the cost of gas, tolls, and parking, enjoy more free time and legroom, reduce wear and mileage on personal vehicles, travel in a more environmentally friendly way, and save time in traffic by accessing HOV lanes (see Figure 12). Figure 13 displays two examples of the SolVan vehicles.

Figure 12: IE Commuter Vanpool Marketing

More reasons to vanpool



Save Time
Zip past traffic in HOV lanes or express lanes.



Stretch Your Legs
Enjoy the comfort of more space in a larger vehicle.



Guaranteed Ride Home
Get a ride home in the event of an emergency or unexpected overtime (restrictions apply).



A Greener Commute
Reduce vehicle miles resulting in less fuel consumption and cleaner air.

Source: IE Commuter, 2022.

Figure 13: SolVan Vehicles



Source: SolVan, 2023.

Demographics and Growth Projections

Understanding current demographics and projected and potential growth is helpful in developing appropriate parking management recommendations. The following subsections provide an overview of relevant information from the City's General Plan, Replica data, the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) demographic forecasts for the City, and growth estimates provided by City staff.

Appendix A incorporates these estimates to develop exploratory calculations for future parking demand for both base growth and aggressive growth scenarios. Ultimately, the exploratory calculations provide a glimpse into what could happen if growth patterns continue according to the status quo, and the City takes no action to improve parking and land use efficiency and reduce the growing footprint of surface parking lots.

Demographic Information

Citywide Demographics

The following information from the General Plan provides local context for the entire City of Desert Hot Springs:

- 30% of residents are under age 18, 16% are 18-29, 40% are 30-61, and 14% are 62 and over.
- The median annual household income is \$34,000, which is lower than the County's median of \$58,000.
 - The average annual household income of those in owner-occupied housing is \$46,000.
 - The average annual household income of those in renter-occupied housing is \$25,000.
- 64% of residents are in lower-income categories.
- The average household size is 3.11 (more than half are 1-2 people, so other households are much larger).
- 65% of the housing stock is single-family housing units, 28% is multi-family, and 8% is mobile homes.
- 13% of units are "overcrowded" as defined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development, occupied by more than one person per room (excluding bathrooms and kitchens).

The Economic Policy Institute **estimated average annual transportation spending for an adult in Desert Hot Springs at \$10,624—nearly half of the City's median individual income**, and over a quarter of the median household income of \$34,000. The average transportation spending figure is an underestimate, as it does not account for how the cost of providing mandated parking spaces increases rents, ownership costs, or other prices.

Vehicle Ownership Estimates

According to Replica data, within the downtown study area, approximately 5 percent of households have no vehicles available, 33 percent have one vehicle, 30 percent have two vehicles, and 32 percent have three or more vehicles. Despite the significant expense of vehicle ownership, this data shows that in many households find vehicle ownership necessary to have transportation to access basic needs and opportunities.

Growth Projections and Potential

Housing Needs and Population Growth Forecasts

Desert Hot Springs' Regional Housing Needs Assessment for the 2021-2029 planning period was determined by SCAG to be 3,873 housing units, including 569 units for extremely/very low-income households, 535 units for low-income households, 688 units for moderate-income households, and 2,081 units for above moderate-income households. The General Plan states that, as part of a comprehensive development code update, the City will evaluate, and modify if necessary, parking standards to ensure that they do not constrain the development of housing, specifically senior housing and multi-family housing.

Between 2000 and 2010, the City's population grew 56 percent, much faster than average for Riverside County. Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) demographic forecasts estimated that the Desert Hot Springs population could nearly double from 29,390 persons in 2019 to 58,900 persons by 2040.

New housing and population growth will affect travel and parking needs, as will the number of visitors and employees coming from other cities and regions.

Economic Growth Potential

Desert Hot Springs expects economic growth to occur throughout the City, as it strengthens its existing tourism and cannabis industries and looks to attract and retain new businesses, including warehousing/fulfillment centers, health care, professional office uses, and regional-serving retail.

Downtown Study Area

The City's vision for the downtown study area prioritizes food and beverage establishments, retail, offices, and health and wellness businesses. Some growth may involve construction that increases the total commercial development footprint, while other growth may simply entail the occupancy of vacant buildings or adaptive reuse that supports the City's vision for downtown.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area

The industrial cannabis study area includes a large amount of undeveloped land and offers significant potential for cannabis-related growth and development. There are currently approximately 575,000 square feet of industrial cannabis developments throughout the entire Industrial Cannabis Overlay area, and the City anticipates this will grow by approximately 1,425,000 square feet, to a total of approximately 2,000,000 square feet, as the area is built out over the next 10 years. There is enough land within the study area boundaries to accommodate this amount of new development, but it is more likely new industrial cannabis developments will be more evenly spread out throughout the entire overlay area.



03 Parking Supply and Demand

Parking Supply and Demand

This section provides a summary of the existing parking supply and demand data for the project's two study areas, the downtown and the industrial cannabis area in Desert Hot Springs. Walker conducted Thursday and Saturday parking counts in December of 2022, on the 1st and 3rd, to represent typical weekday and weekend demand on days without special circumstances or events. The data includes approximate inventories of on-street parking spaces in both areas provided by Walker's partner, Arcadis IBI Group. For occupancy data, Walker conducted counts for the morning, lunch hour, afternoon, and evening period each day for all parking in the downtown and for street parking in the industrial cannabis area, as well as a large sample of peak weekday parking occupancies for many of the private and gated off-street facilities in the industrial cannabis area. Counts were conducted every three hours between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm.

Downtown Study Area

The downtown study area (as shown in Figure 2 on page 21 and Figure 15 on page 50) centers around Pierson Boulevard, between Cholla Drive to the west and Mesquite Avenue to the east. It extends one block north to 1st Street, between West Drive and Mesquite Avenue, and one block south to Acoma Avenue, between Cholla Drive and Mesquite Avenue. This study area includes ten blocks total. Pierson Boulevard is lined with businesses and institutions, with properties that occasionally extend to First Street and Acoma Avenue. Most of the other properties along First Street and Acoma Avenue are single family homes.

Downtown Parking Supply

The downtown study area contains approximately 1,800 parking spaces, including approximately 800 on-street spaces and approximately 1,000 off-street spaces. This does not include single family home driveways and garages or parking lots with fewer than five spaces. There are currently no designated public parking lots.

Walker's partner, Arcadis IBI Group, provided the number of parking spaces available for streets in the downtown study area. Walker conducted an inventory count of spaces for 36 parking lots. Table 2 displays the quantity of parking spaces counted at each off-street parking lot by study area block, and a corresponding map number for each facility. Figure 15 on page 47 shows the location of each facility on the map.

Table 2: Downtown Desert Hot Springs Off-Street Parking Inventories by Facility

Number on Map	Facility Address	Associated/Adjacent Business or Institution	Parking Inventory
1	66038 Pierson Blvd	Más More Better Skate Shop	9
2	66070 Pierson Blvd	JC Realtors, Cutting Edge Hair Salon	5
3	66088 Pierson Blvd	Grown&Sexy Playhouse	5
4	66230 Pierson Blvd	The Cottage Too	35
5	66272 Pierson Blvd	Casillas Funeral Home	22
6	66292 Pierson Blvd	DHS Collective	6
7	66370 Pierson Blvd	Casa Blanca	26
8	66369 Pierson Blvd	Carnicería Mi Ranchito	14
9	66424 Pierson Blvd	Rose Mortuary	12
10	66434 Pierson Blvd	City Hall Overflow Lot	5
11	66450 Pierson Blvd	DHS Dental	10
12	65950 Pierson Blvd	City Hall	29
13	11876 Palm Drive	N/A (NW Corner of block)	23
14	11930 Palm Drive	Dynasty Driving School	10
15	11940 Pierson Blvd	N/A (SW corner of block)	21
16	66550 Pierson Blvd	Builders Supply	61
17	66669 First Street	St. Elizabeth Annex	9
18	66700 Pierson Blvd	St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish	168
19	65861 Pierson Blvd	FJH Tax Services	12
20	65909 Pierson Blvd	Covenant Church	9
21	65935, 65947, 65957, 65961 Pierson Blvd	A Classic Act Hair & Nail Studio, Just Gina's Hair & Nail Salon, DHS Coin Laundry, Tan's Pizza, 7-Eleven	43
22	66041 Pierson Blvd	Four Winds Realty	5
23	66121 and 66135 Pierson Blvd	Delicias Mexican Cuisine, Café Bella	32
24	66169 and 66171 Pierson Blvd	The Spread, IVTHC Inland Valley Therapeutic Healing Center	11
25	66309 Pierson Blvd	N/A	103
26	66321 Pierson Blvd	The Micro Buddery Dispensary (Angled parking with entrance off Pierson Blvd)	12
27	66321 Pierson Blvd	The Micro Buddery Dispensary (Gated lot with entrance off Acoma Avenue)	24
28	66425 Pierson Blvd	Farmer In the Dale Produce	25
29	66463 Pierson Blvd, etc.	Pierson Blvd and Palm Drive – S/E Corner Development	74
30	12070, 12076, 12078, 12084, 12106 Palm Drive	Thai Palms Restaurant, CK Authentic Thai Massage, Haalos Bodywork Emporium, Meina Hair Salon, Tax Accounting Services, Desert's Finest Dispensary	36
31	12040 Palm Dr	N/A (gravel lot)	24

Number on Map	Facility Address	Associated/Adjacent Business or Institution	Parking Inventory
32	66523 Pierson Blvd	N/A (between fence and BBVA brick wall)	22
33	66565 Pierson Blvd	BBVA Compass Bank (PNC Bank)	18
34	66675 Pierson Blvd	Borrego Health	43
35	66695 Pierson Blvd	Iglesia de Dios Monte Sinai	16
36	66735 Pierson Blvd	United Methodist Church – paved lot off Acoma Avenue	20
Total			999

Source: Walker Consultants, 2022.

Downtown Parking Demand Counts

This section shows how parking demand downtown varies according to time of day and day of the week. It includes spatial analysis of demand throughout the downtown study area, including both private off-street facilities and public street parking.

A widely recognized best practice in parking management involves the comparison of actual parking utilization rates with an 85 percent occupancy target. When parking is 85 percent occupied, spaces are well-used, but it is also still possible for drivers to find a space without cruising around waiting for another driver to leave, which would result in increased emissions and traffic congestion. Utilization rates can be compared with this 85 percent threshold at various levels of analysis—for individual block segments, streets, parking lots, or an entire area.

- Overall parking occupancy for all on and off-street spaces in the downtown study area ranged from 12 percent to 18 percent—always well below the 85 percent occupancy target.
- Peak demand was observed at 9:00 am on Thursday, December 1st. Even during this peak demand hour, the overall utilization was only 18 percent. No block segments had a parking occupancy over 85 percent, and only two off-street facilities (City Hall Overflow lot and Borrego Health) exceeded this threshold.
- Parking demand was slightly higher on Thursday than on Saturday, and fairly stable throughout each day, without extreme peak periods. Thursday parking utilization ranged from 17 to 18 percent, and Saturday utilization ranged from 12 to 15 percent (see Figure 14 on page 47).

Target Parking Utilization



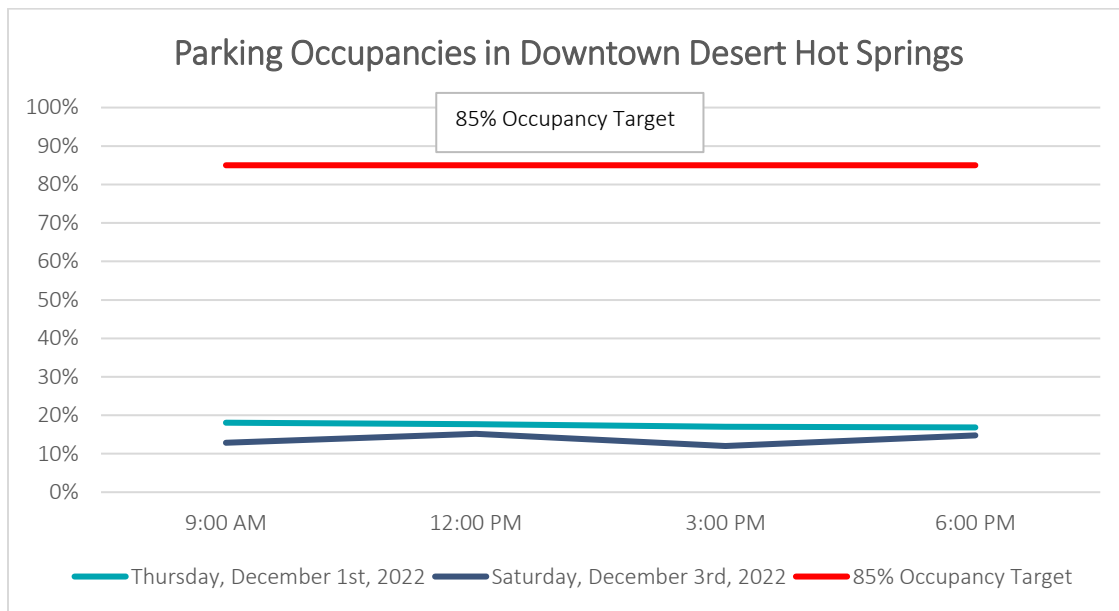
85% occupancy is the optimal goal for downtown parking utilization. At 85%, **most spaces are utilized** while those seeking a space can find one with minimal searching.

When occupancy is **over 85%**, people begin perceiving parking as **“full”** and often must **search longer** to find a space.

Even when total parking occupancy is observed to be at or below the 85 percent threshold, efficient parking management requires understanding how evenly occupancy is spread across the study area. When occupancy rates are above the 85 percent threshold in some areas but not in others, a city might respond by implementing or increasing prices in the high demand areas, or by improving signage and wayfinding so drivers know where parking is available. Maintaining availability of on-street parking is especially important to support local businesses, ensuring

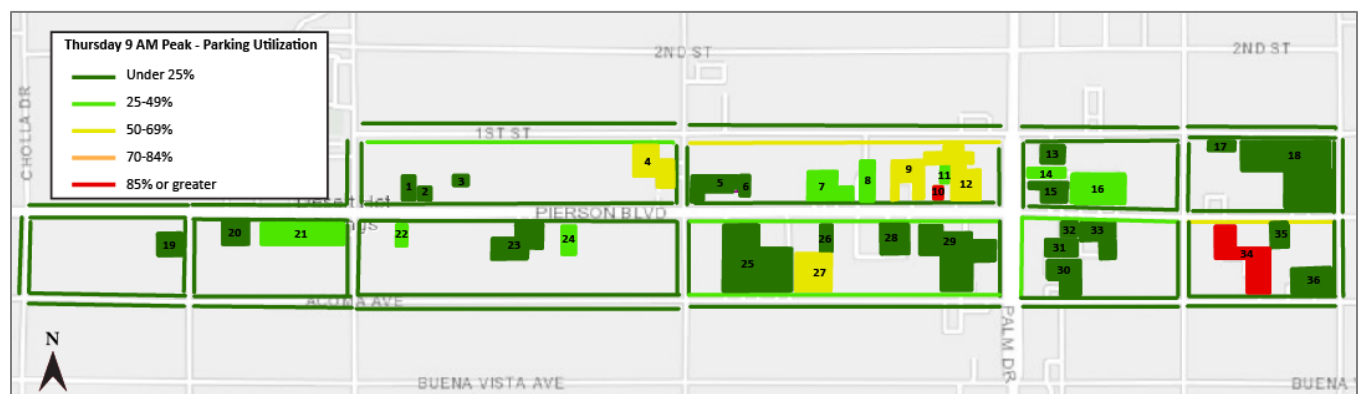
that potential customers interested in a quick trip are not discouraged from visiting due to a lack of convenient street parking. Based on the demand counts conducted for this study, uneven parking occupancy is not currently a problem in downtown Desert Hot Springs. Even during the peak demand hour at 9:00 am on Thursday, no block segments had parking occupancy over 85 percent, and only two off-street facilities (City Hall Overflow lot and Borrego Health) exceeded this threshold, and there were still many available spaces in the surrounding area. Figure 15 displays the peak hour utilization by downtown street segment and off-street lot.

Figure 14: Thursday and Saturday Parking Utilization in Downtown Desert Hot Springs



Source: Walker Consultants, 2022.

Figure 15: Thursday 9AM Peak Hour - Parking Utilization in Downtown Desert Hot Springs



Source: Walker Consultants, 2022.

Downtown Field Observations

Driving through the downtown study area in Desert Hot Springs, the team observed plentiful on-street and off-street parking and a number of vacant parcels. Some of the on-street parking along Pierson Boulevard was broken into segments by curb extensions protecting palm trees (see Figure 16). The downtown study area included retail, dining, and residential uses, including many single family homes. There were many curb cuts and driveways. Some businesses were right next to the sidewalk, creating a more welcoming environment for pedestrians, but others were set back by their parking lot. The blocks along Pierson Boulevard were relatively long, without pedestrian crossings.

Figure 16: Street parking along Pierson



Source: Walker Consultants, 2022.

Downtown Study Area Curb Use

The curb is a valuable public asset. Public space along the curb has many potential uses, including:

- Parking lot or driveway access
- Fire hydrant access
- Public parking for privately-owned vehicles
- Public parking for privately-owned bicycles and scooters
- Car share parking
- Bike/scooter share docking station
- Protected bike lanes
- Transit boarding stops
- Passenger pick-up and drop-off areas
- Loading and delivery zones
- Outdoor dining and gathering areas
- Pocket parks or community gardens
- Green space and landscaping

In some cases, the use of curb space is restricted to ensure visibility and improve traffic safety. In other cases, use of the curb space may be limited where the space is necessary to access a driveway or parking lot. In the downtown study area, these “curb cuts” accounted for approximately 310 vehicle spaces worth of curb space, according to data provided by Arcadis IBI Group, using the curb mapping software Curb IQ.

The downtown did not have any curb spaces dedicated to bike or scooter parking, car share parking, protected bike lanes, transit boarding stops, loading areas, outdoor dining and gathering, or pocket parks. Some curb space was used as landscaping for the palm trees lining Pierson Boulevard, but most curb space was dedicated to private vehicle parking.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area

The industrial cannabis study area is within the City’s Industrial Cannabis Overlay. Figure 17 on page 50 displays the study area boundaries. There are many businesses in the area, but a large share of the land also remains undeveloped. The study area includes the following streets:

- Little Morongo Road from 13th Avenue to Dillon Road
- Cabot Drive from Two Bunch Palms Trail to 15th Avenue
- Two Bunch Palms Trail from Little Morongo Road to Cholla Drive
- San Jacinto Lane from Little Morongo Road to Cabot Drive
- San Gorgonio Lane from Little Morongo Road to Cabot Drive
- Palomar Lane from Little Morongo Road to Cabot Drive
- 15th Avenue from Little Morongo Road to Cabot Drive

Industrial Cannabis Area Parking Supply

On-Street Parking

The street parking supplies in the industrial cannabis study area were provided by Walker’s partner, Arcadis IBI group, a firm with expertise in digital curb mapping. There were approximately 1,873 potential street parking spaces in total along the seven streets in the study area (see Table 3). Of these:

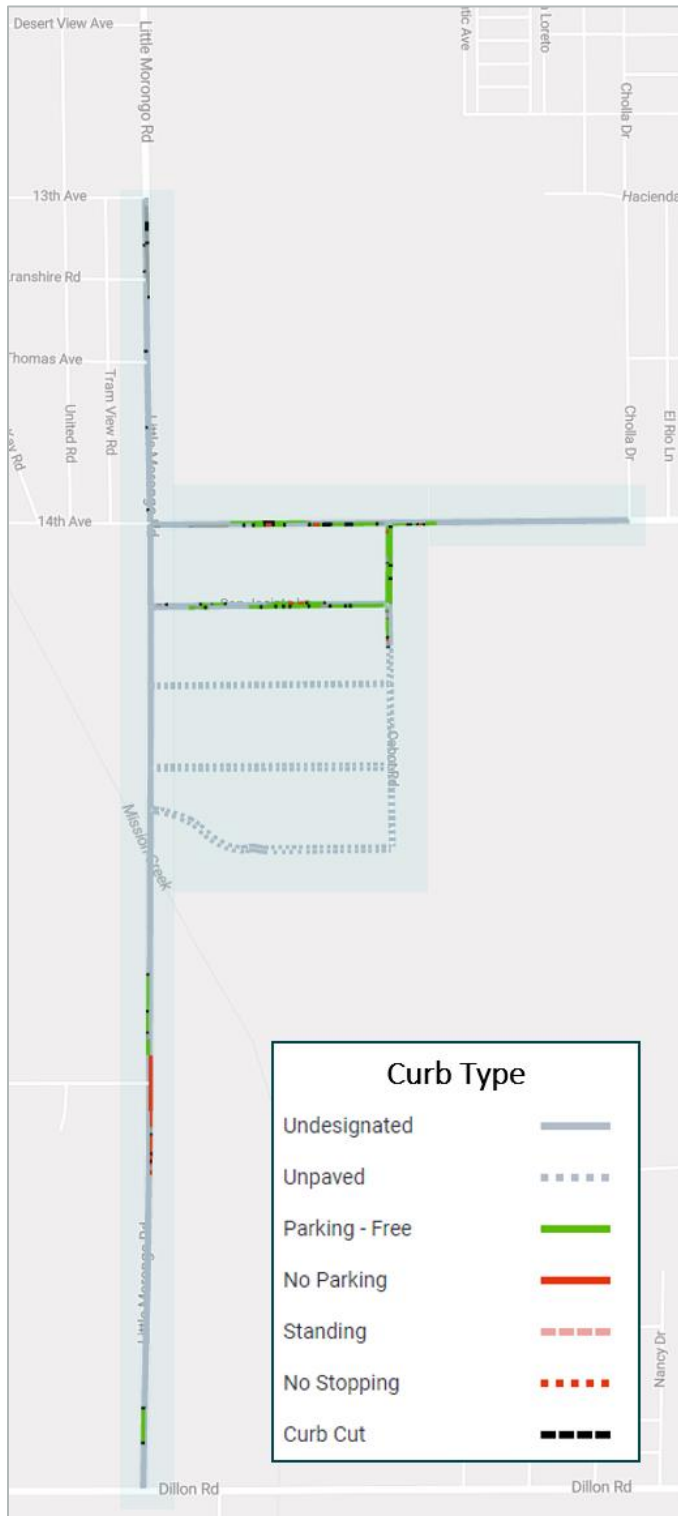
- Approximately 215 spaces, or 11 percent, are already developed as curb parking with a curb/sidewalk and paved roadway. These are labeled “Parking – Free” in Figure 17 below.
- Approximately 1,057 spaces, or 56 percent, are spaces where there is a paved roadway but no formal curb. These are labeled “Undesignated” in Figure 17.
- The remaining 601 spaces, or 32 percent, are potential future spaces on unpaved areas (e.g., San Gorgonio Lane, Palomar Lane, 15th Avenue, and a portion of Cabot Rd). These are labeled “Unpaved” in Figure 17.

Table 3: Desert Hot Springs Industrial Cannabis Area – Street Parking Inventories

Street	Parking Inventory	Type(s)
Little Morongo Road	780	Parking – Free; Undesignated
Cabot Road	214	Parking – Free; Undesignated; Unpaved
15th Avenue	162	Unpaved
Palomar Lane	147	Unpaved
San Gorgonio Lane	156	Unpaved
San Jacinto Lane	130	Parking – Free; Undesignated
Two Bunch Palms Trail	284	Parking – Free; Undesignated
Total	1,873	

Source: Data – IBI Group, Table - Walker Consultants, 2022.

Figure 17: Industrial Cannabis Area Streets



Source: IBI Group and CurbiQ, 2023.

Selected Off-Street Facilities

Most off-street parking facilities in the area were gated, and some were monitored by a parking attendant or security staff member. For many of the cannabis facilities, Walker was able to speak with the staff on site to obtain access to the facility and conduct parking inventory and occupancy counts. Table 4 displays the list of off-street facilities within the study area where parking counts were conducted.

Table 4: Desert Hot Springs Industrial Cannabis Area – Selected Off-Street Parking Facility Inventories

Facility Address	Associated Business	Parking Inventory
13300 Little Morongo Road	Desert Hot Springs Green Horizons, Inc. (Med Men)	81
13310 Little Morongo Road	NUMACO, LLC	203
15850 Little Morongo Road	Industrial Park	217
65000 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Med for America, Inc.	225
65283 Two Bunch Palms Trail	TBP Indoor Facilities - T2	18
65321 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Candescent, MBC	35
65441 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Med for America, Inc.	60
65242 San Jacinto Lane	San Jac Facilities LLC	12
65282 San Jacinto Lane	A CUT ABOVE, LLC	27

Source: Walker Consultants, 2022.

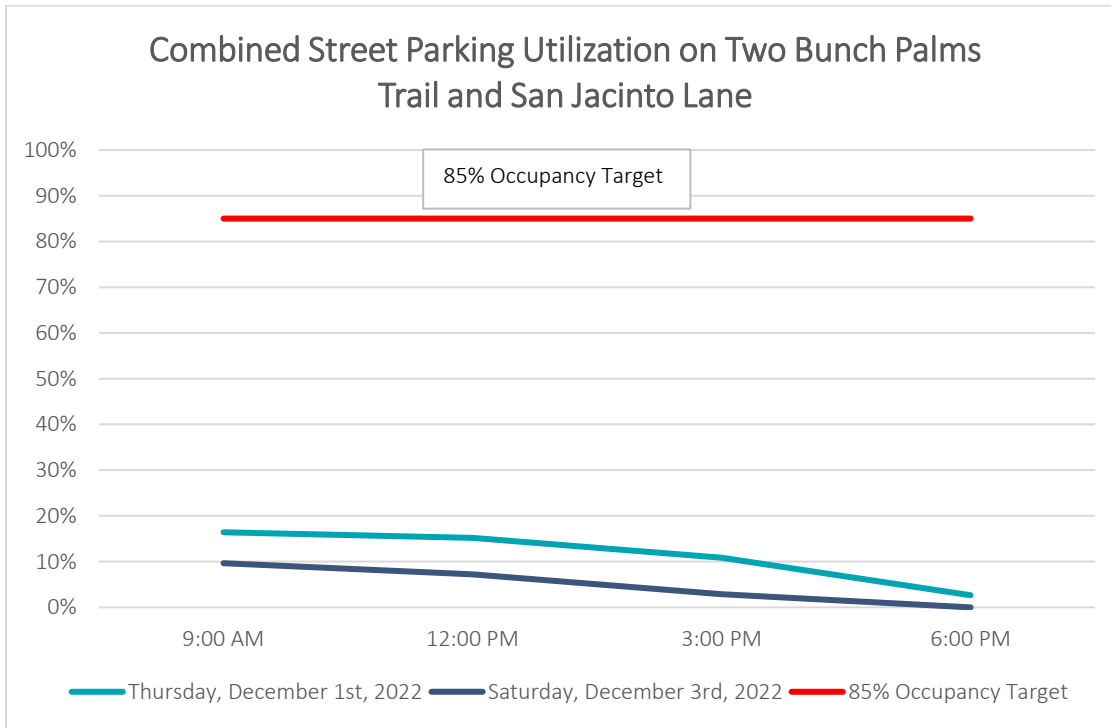
Industrial Cannabis Area Parking Demand Counts

Walker conducted street parking counts every three hours between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm on both Thursday and Saturday. Vehicles were observed parking on the street only on Two Bunch Palms Trail and San Jacinto Lane. There were approximately 414 spaces available on these two streets, and together, their combined utilization ranged from 0 percent on Saturday evening to 16 percent on Thursday morning.

Demand varied according to time of day and day of the week. Street parking utilization was higher on Thursday than Saturday during all observation periods, and on both days, utilization was highest in the morning and decreased throughout the day (see Figure 18 on page 52).

Most off-street parking facilities in the area were gated, and some were monitored by a parking attendant or security staff member. In some cases, Walker was able to speak with the staff on site to obtain access to the facility and conduct parking inventory and occupancy counts. The off-street facility occupancy counts were all collected sometime on Thursday, December 1st, during the peak demand period between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. Utilization data for these sample facilities is displayed in Table 5 on page 52. A total of 523 vehicles were counted in a total of 878 private off-street parking spaces, for an average utilization of 60 percent across the sampled facilities. The highest utilization at any individual facility was 80 percent, observed at 65000 Two Bunch Palms Trail.

Figure 18: Combined Street Parking Utilization on Two Bunch Palms Trail and San Jacinto Lane



Source: Inventory Data – IBI Group, Occupancy Data and Graph - Walker Consultants, 2022.

Table 5: Desert Hot Springs Industrial Cannabis Area – Selected Off-Street Parking Facility Utilization

Facility Address	Associated Business	Parking Inventory	Peak Hours Occupancy	Peak Hours Utilization
13300 Little Morongo Road	Desert Hot Springs Green Horizons, Inc. (Med Men)	81	10	12%
13310 Little Morongo Road	NUMACO, LLC	203	116	57%
15850 Little Morongo Road	Industrial Park	217	144	66%
65000 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Med for America, Inc.	225	180	80%
65283 Two Bunch Palms Trail	TBP Indoor Facilities - T2	18	8	44%
65321 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Canndescent, MBC	35	18	51%
65441 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Med for America, Inc.	60	25	42%
65242 San Jacinto Lane	San Jac Facilities LLC	12	6	50%
65282 San Jacinto Lane	A CUT ABOVE, LLC	27	16	59%

Source: Walker Consultants, 2022.

Industrial Cannabis Area Field Observations

The team drove through the industrial cannabis study area and observed conditions along Two Bunch Palms Trail. The area on the north side of the street was mostly undeveloped land. Most vehicles parked along the street were parked in the gravel on the north side of the street. There were empty places open for parking, but pedestrian travel along Two Bunch Palms Trail seemed dangerous, as many portions of the street did not have sidewalks. The street was wide and conducive to driving at high speeds. The speed limit was 45 miles per hour, and there were no traffic calming measures and very few light fixtures in place. Despite these conditions, several pedestrians were seen walking or riding a scooter from the cannabis facilities toward Palm Drive (see Figure 13). The cannabis district was near the west end of Two Bunch Palms, and there did not seem to be much through traffic on the street.

The other streets in the industrial cannabis study area did not have full sidewalks either, although there were sidewalks in front of some individual developments. Three streets (San Gorgonio Lane, Palomar Lane, and 15th Avenue) were still unpaved and did not yet have any buildings constructed along them. Most of the land along Little Morongo Road also remained undeveloped. Cabot Drive was closed for road construction during the December counts, but enough other street parking was available in the nearby vicinity that this was not thought to impact the results.

When the team first visited the area in October 2022, vehicles were parked in the gravel on the north side of the Two Bunch Palms, including parallel parking, angled parking, and sometimes informally parking two layers deep and leaving space for vehicles to enter and exit. When Walker returned in December 2022 for the parking counts, there were fewer vehicles parked on the street, and all were parked parallel. A parking attendant explained that this was because the DreamFields facility had changed locations from the south to north side of the street, at 65000 Two Bunch Palms Trail, and now offered more parking for employees. Much of this parking was on an unpermitted gravel lot, which the business was planning to pave in the future. Walker observed a shift change at this facility at around 2:30 pm on Thursday, which seemed to go smoothly and did not result in any queuing along Two Bunch Palms Trail.

There were also two religious institutions within the study area—Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses along Two Bunch Palms and First Pentecostal Church of the Coachella Valley on San Jacinto—with large parking lots empty most of the time.

Figure 13: Person riding a scooter along Two Bunch Palms Trail



Source: IBI Group, 2022.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area Curb Use

In the industrial cannabis study area, “curb cuts” accounted for approximately 59 vehicle spaces worth of curb space. The industrial cannabis study area did not have any curb space dedicated to bike or scooter parking, car share parking, protected bike lanes, transit boarding stops, loading areas, outdoor dining and gathering, or pocket parks. Most curb space was either still undeveloped or dedicated to private vehicle parking.

Summary of Key Parking Supply and Demand Findings

Downtown Study Area

- The downtown study area contains approximately 1,800 parking spaces, including approximately 800 spaces on-street and approximately 1,000 spaces off-street.
- Downtown parking demand was slightly higher on Thursday than on Saturday, and fairly stable throughout each day, without extreme peak periods.
- Overall, Thursday parking utilization ranged from 17 to 18 percent, and Saturday parking utilization ranged from 12 to 15 percent.
- For the study area as a whole, parking utilization was always well below the recommended target of 85 percent. For several individual parking lots, parking did exceed the 85 percent threshold during peak periods, but there was always ample street parking available nearby.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area

- A total of 1,873 existing and “potential” (with no formal curb and/or currently unpaved) street parking spaces were available in the area.
- Street parking occurred only on Two Bunch Palms Trail and San Jacinto Lane. On these streets:
 - Thursday utilization ranged from a high of 16 percent at 9:00 am to 3 percent at 6:00 pm.
 - Saturday utilization ranged from a high of 10 percent at 9:00 am to 0 percent at 6:00 pm.
- Peak demand occurs during weekday mornings and early afternoon. During this time, the average parking utilization was 60 percent across the sampled off-street facilities. The highest utilization at any individual facility was 80 percent.
- Most developments provide more than enough off-street parking to meet the typical parking demand of their employees.



04 Outreach and Engagement

Outreach and Engagement

As part of the plan development process, the project team developed and implemented an outreach and engagement strategy that included outreach to the general public as well as to some key stakeholders in particular. This chapter documents the engagement and outreach efforts, which included coordination with relevant local and regional government agencies, outreach to civic/business organizations, interaction through community events and in-person engagement, virtual community meetings, and a parking survey.

Overview of Key Stakeholder Outreach

The outreach completed with key stakeholders included a mixture of pre-planned interviews over the remote meeting software Microsoft Teams, impromptu in-person engagement, and planned in-person engagement.

Agencies contacted include:

- **Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC)** – the managing agency that oversees distribution of transportation funding for Riverside County, principally from Measure A sales tax dollars. RCTC also administers state and federal funds to communities throughout Riverside County, owns the Perris Valley Line rail corridor, owns and operates commuter rail stations, and funds other transit services in the county.
- **SunLine Transit** – the primary transit provider in the Coachella Valley. SunLine Transit operates fixed route local bus service, longer-distance commuter-oriented regional service along Interstate 10 between Indio and San Bernardino, a flexible microtransit service (known as SunRide), paratransit service (known as SunDial), and also regulates taxi service in the area.
- **City of Desert Hot Springs Planning** – the City’s planning department, which oversees land use in the City and that will be involved in implementation of recommendations from this study.
- **IECommuter** – a program in the Inland Empire that supports carpooling/vanpooling service in Riverside County, supports employers in meeting clean-air mandates, and assists with commute survey reporting.

Civic and Business Organizations contacted include:

- **Downtown Steering Committee** – an ad-hoc committee of business owners and interested residents that served in a volunteer capacity to make recommendations for improvements in the Downtown area.
- **Industrial District/Cannabis Corridor Businesses** – businesses located along Two Bunch Palms Trail, Cabot Road, San Jacinto Lane, and Little Morongo Road, where the majority of development is occurring in the Industrial District/Cannabis Corridor.
- **General Business Licensees** – registered businesses in Desert Hot Springs, screened to cover a representative sample of the greater Desert Hot Springs business community.

Table 6 on page 57 provides a summary of touchpoints, dates, and methods of data collection from engagement efforts to key stakeholders. Subsequent sections document the feedback received from these engagement efforts.

Table 6: Interagency Coordination and Civic/Business Organization Outreach Overview

Audience	Date(s)	Meeting /Data Collection Format
RCTC Staff	4/17/23	Email
SunLine Transit Staff	4/19/23	Microsoft Teams virtual meeting / meeting notes
Desert Hot Springs Planning Staff	4/27/23	Phone Call
IECommuter	5/12/23	Microsoft Teams virtual meeting / meeting notes
Downtown Steering Committee	10/24/22	In-person presentation / meeting notes
Industrial District/Cannabis Corridor Businesses	4/26/23	In-person outreach
Business Licensees (Including Downtown and Industrial Corridor Businesses)	April-May 2023	Email contact and digital survey

Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Feedback Received – Interagency Coordination

The section below covers information and feedback received from each agency contacted.

RCTC Email – 4/17/23

The technical team contacted RCTC staff to provide an overview of the project and identify any potential ways in which the agency’s current work or planning efforts might need to be considered by the study’s technical team. The Transit Manager of the Multimodal Department provided an overview of the agency’s role in leading regional transportation efforts, managing sources of transportation funding (including local, state, and federal sources), and supporting local transit operations. Due to the way that service in Desert Hot Springs is provided by SunLine Transit, more detailed discussions with that agency were recommended.

The Transit Manager noted that the only longer-range transit project that the agency is involved with in the Coachella Valley is the Coachella Valley Rail Corridor project which would provide new passenger transit service between the area and Los Angeles. This project has completed a Tier 1 environmental impact statement/environmental impact report and is pursuing funding for Tier II environmental analysis. It is not directly relevant to this study.

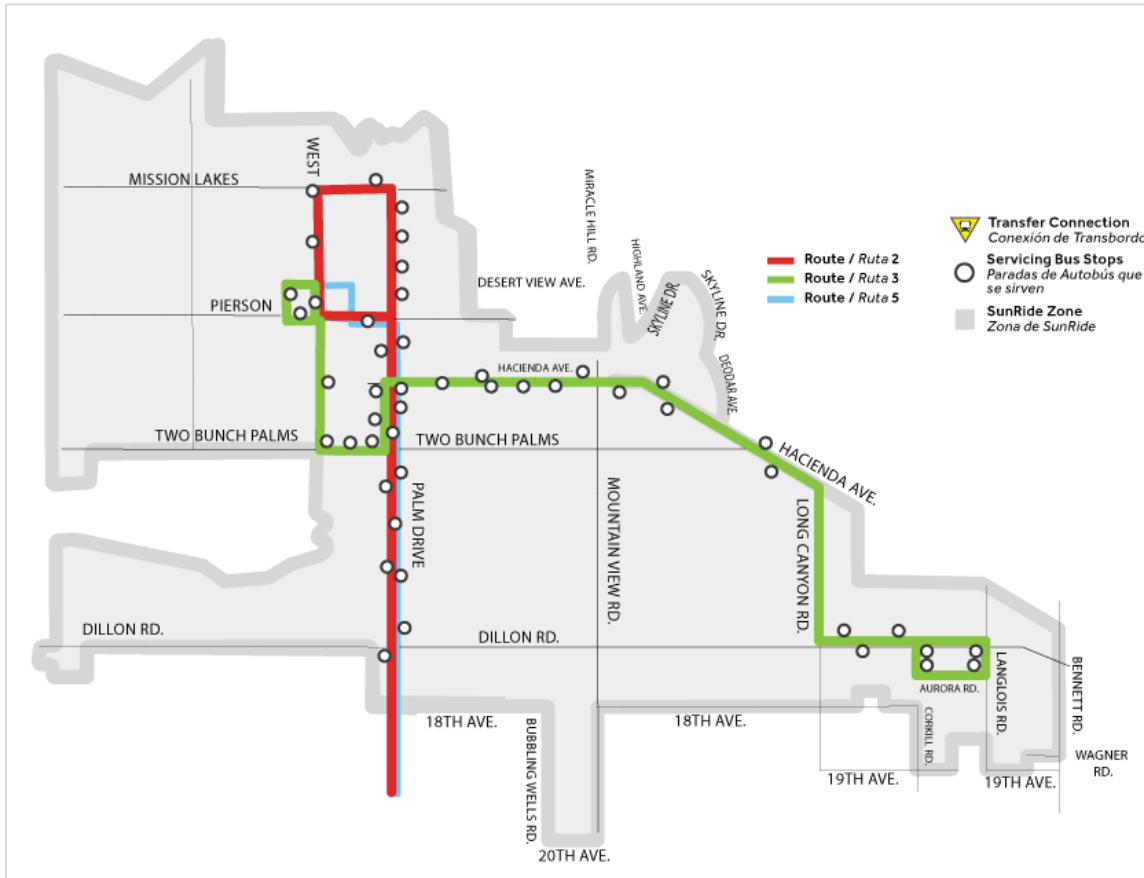
SunLine Transit Meeting – 4/19/23

The technical team held a virtual meeting over Microsoft Teams with three members of SunLine Transit’s staff: a Planning Technician, the Transportation Services Coordinator, and the Planning Manager. The discussion was focused on three primary items: existing fixed-route transit service, current and future flexible microtransit service, and carpool/vanpool programs.

SunLine Transit currently operates three fixed-route transit lines in Desert Hot Springs, covering the major roads where there is adequate infrastructure with a curb that can be serviced. All three routes connect with the Downtown Study Area. Route 3 travels along Two Bunch Palms Trail but turns north on West Drive, and the agency noted that they historically had not serviced the area west of Cholla Drive due to the lack of pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks. The agency is dependent on the City and private property owners to provide and maintain the infrastructure that is needed for a bus stop. SunLine Transit staff also noted that the extreme conditions in the desert (such as high heat, high wind, and flooding on rainy days) can disrupt transit service and act as a barrier to transit use.

In order to provide a more flexible transit service option, SunLine began offering SunRide, a service that utilizes a fleet of minivans (ADA accessible Chrysler Pacificas) that operate within a zone rather than along major streets only. The service operates Monday-Friday from 5:30 am to 6:30 pm, with riders requesting and paying for service using a smartphone app, and pick-ups/drop-offs occurring at virtual stops located throughout the service area. The service has experienced significant growth in ridership (including by students at Desert Hot Springs High School), and the service area was expanded in early May 2023 to include a larger portion of the City, including the portions of the Industrial Cannabis Study Area with the highest concentration of employment. A map of SunLine Transit’s fixed route transit service and SunRide service area (gray shaded area) is illustrated in Figure 19 on page 59.

Figure 19: SunLine Transit Fixed Route and Flexible Transit (SunRide) Service Area



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Finally, SunLine Transit oversees SolVan, a vanpooling program that supports shared transportation. Vanpools are typically organized by a group of people traveling to the same work site and are particularly well suited for locations where people work shifts with regular start/stop times and where employees are traveling long distances from home. Vanpools usually have a lead point of contact who helps to manage the vanpool and rider list, track mileage, and organize the vanpool, often with help from a designated Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) or other staff member at their organization. Vans are leased from a private firm, and SolVan provides a monthly subsidy of 50 percent of the lease, up to \$400 for standard vehicles and \$500 for electric vehicles to reduce the cost burden for the vanpool participants. SolVan currently supports approximately ten vanpools in the greater Coachella Valley area. Depending on the home locations of employees in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area, this program may help encourage shared travel and reduce parking demand.

Desert Hot Springs Planning Department Meeting – 4/27/23

The technical team spoke with the City’s Community Development Director to review the analysis completed for the project. The discussion focused on potential strategies that the City of Desert Hot Springs could use to encourage a more vibrant and economically productive city. The three most significant discussion topics included:

- **Industrial Cannabis Study Area parking requirements.** The City’s current zoning does not adequately address parking needs for cannabis facilities, primarily due to it being based on calculations that were projected when the industry was still in its infancy. As cannabis producers have shifted from growing cannabis to a greater amount of manufacturing that refines the raw material into other products, the workforce/labor requirements related to those activities have also shifted parking demand at the job sites. More recent and accurate data relating to parking demand and the number of employees working in each segment of the industry will better inform future parking requirements or approvals.
- **Economic development.** The City is developing strategies to encourage economic development, in particular in the Downtown Study Area along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard. Strategies discussed included the City purchasing key parcels/properties to dedicate them toward public uses, beautification of streetscapes, and identification of locations that could serve as anchors or draws to development.
- **Lessons learned from other jurisdictions.** City of Desert Hot Springs staff are working to apply lessons learned from strategies and projects that have been deployed in other cities with similar contexts, such as 29 Palms, to support economic development goals.

Additional input from planning staff was captured during the review process for other technical memos during the study.

IE Commuter – 5/12/2023

The technical team held a meeting with IE Commuter, a regional organization supported by RCTC and the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) that operates in the Inland Empire (IE). IE Commuter helps employers set up and maintain rideshare programs at their businesses and supports individual commuters who are interested in shared mobility (such as carpooling, vanpooling, and transit). The team spoke with two staff members who oversee and support the program’s operations in Desert Hot Springs and the greater IE Commuter service area.

Staff considered the program as a “concierge service” that helps connect employers and employees to shared mobility options. IE Commuter maintains a ride matching database to help connect members of the public that may wish to commute between similar areas and subsidizes carpools at a rate of \$5/day to help offset costs.

One of the program’s primary functions is to support regulations administered by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD), the agency responsible for improving air quality for large areas of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including the Coachella Valley. The AQMD’s Rule 2202 requires employers with greater than 250 employees to develop plans to reduce single-occupancy vehicle commutes to their job sites, monitor progress, and support shared mobility options. Businesses typically designate an individual responsible for monitoring the organization’s compliance with regulations, promoting shared mobility (such as carpooling and vanpooling), and supporting employees in trip reduction efforts. Businesses that do not choose to engage in a trip reduction program can pay into the AQMD Air Quality Investment Program, which funds programs that help to offset the environmental impacts of commuters.

IE Commuter staff noted that they are in regular communication with DreamFields in the Desert Hot Springs Industrial Cannabis Study Area to promote carpooling/vanpooling initiatives, and there is a designated person who does direct outreach to businesses located in the City to encourage shared mobility.

Feedback Received – Civic/Business Organizations

The section below covers information and feedback received from civic organizations and businesses contacted.

Downtown Steering Committee Meeting – 10/24/22

In 2022, the City of Desert Hot Springs convened an ad-hoc, volunteer-based Downtown Steering Committee to provide a forum for community members to brainstorm a vision and potential strategies for improving the Downtown district. Participants worked in three subgroups focused on particular aspects of the built environment and activity in the area, and generated presentations and reports with recommendations for further study. The committee was divided into three subgroups, each of which proposed ideas for implementation listed below.

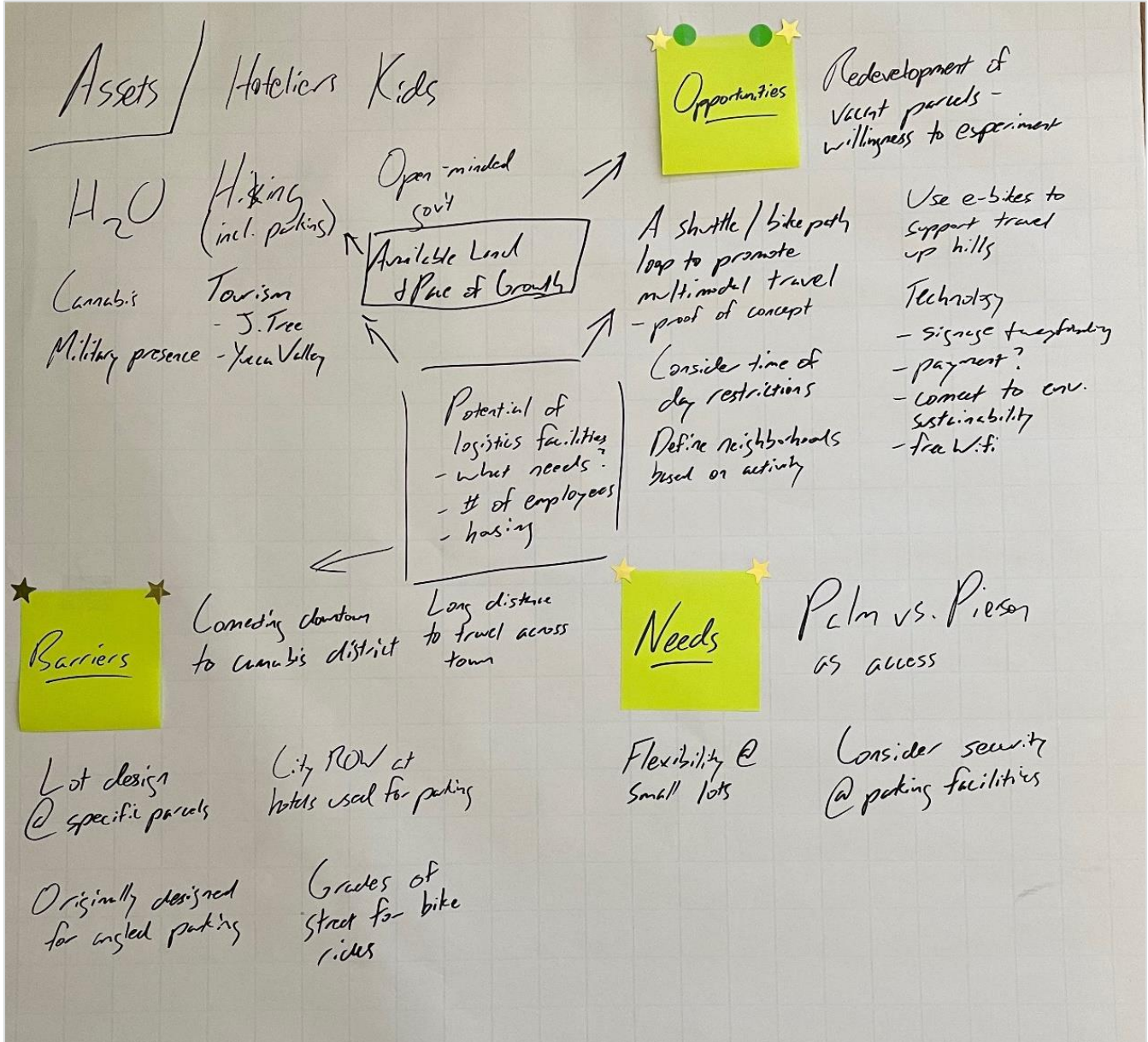
- **Resident Subgroup Ideas**
 - Buying land and using it to incentivize economic development.
 - Incentivize existing restaurants to move so they're more centrally located.
 - Beautification efforts such as removal of security bars on windows and public art/murals.
 - Youth activities such as playgrounds, water fountains, outdoor movies.
 - Urban design guidelines to bring a consistent look to development.
- **Arts and Tourism Subgroup Ideas**
 - Public space/multi-purpose structures.
 - Live music (in the street with street closures).
 - More holiday events and street closures to help create a downtown feel.
- **Business Subgroup Ideas**
 - People want different kinds of restaurants, including a higher-end restaurant for special occasions. People also want more amenities for the kids such as arcades, bowling alleys, roller or ice-skating rinks.
 - Consideration of tax or parking incentives for new development.
 - Rideshare for cannabis employees or a shuttle between downtown and the district.
 - Vacancy tax downtown to encourage occupancy.
 - New businesses could potentially start in the container park and move to a parcel once they successfully grow.
 - Active transportation infrastructure to support travel from hotels to downtown.

Shortly after initiation of the Parking Management Study, the technical team delivered a presentation to the Downtown Steering Committee to introduce the project and gather some initial feedback that could inform the parking analysis. Feedback was gathered in four primary categories:

- **Assets** identified included the natural hot springs, the existing tourist industry, hiking trails, hotels, the cannabis industry, available land for development, and an open-minded government that is willing to experiment.
- **Opportunities** identified included redevelopment of vacant parcels, potential deployment of shuttles or bike paths to better connect activity centers, the potential for e-bikes to help overcome hills and long travel distances and connect the Spa Zone with the downtown, opportunities to provide bike and e-bike parking serving the downtown, and technology that could be deployed as the redevelopment occurs to support wayfinding, payment for parking, or information for visitors.
- **Barriers** identified included the long travel distances between activity centers and lack of connections between them, as well as restrictive parking requirements on parcels in the Downtown Business District.
- **Needs** identified included redevelopment of vacant parcels and empty lots, security at parking facilities, and consideration of how Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard act as the primary access routes to the Downtown area.

Participants also noted that the city is expecting development of logistics facilities that will bring new employment, as well as corresponding impacts on traffic and housing needs. The photo in Figure 20 on page 63 illustrates notes captured during the meeting.

Figure 20: Photo of Feedback Gathered from Downtown Steering Committee



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

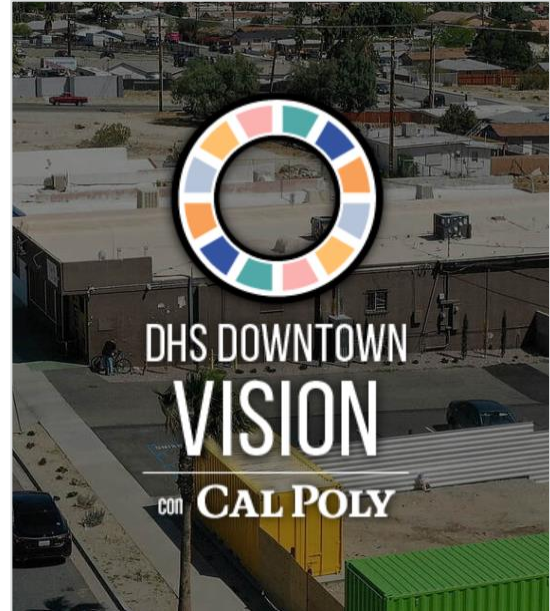
Student-Led Downtown Vision Outreach – January-March 2023

Separate from but running concurrently with this project, graduate students from Cal Poly Pomona’s City and Regional Planning program created a **Downtown Vision Plan** for the City of Desert Hot Springs.

The vision statement created for the downtown area was:

“In the future, downtown Desert Hot Springs will be a thriving and innovative place where residents are proud of their community culture. Our small businesses draw locals and tourists to downtown. Residents enjoy spending their time shopping, dining, and socializing. The vibe downtown is vibrant, inclusive, and safe.”

The plan included a range of ideas and recommendations for economic development, urban design and beautification strategies, transportation improvements, and other aspects of the built environment. The student team led a community engagement event in January 2023 to gather feedback on the ideas. The project’s summary of community feedback—including from a community workshop, five high school



tabling events, and a virtual community forum—noted support for reduced parking requirements to encourage economic development, and varying feedback on the need for or reuse of existing off-street parking areas. Recommendations from the Downtown Vision Plan that are relevant to this project included:

- Updating the zoning code to provide more flexibility and greater diversity in allowed land uses, enabling more mixed-use development.
- Improving the pedestrian environment by limiting commercial driveways, minimizing building setbacks, and providing public spaces.
- Facilitating infill development on undeveloped land.
- Establishing a Downtown Business Association.
- Improving infrastructure and connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Providing bike parking throughout downtown.
- Improving comfort and safety at downtown transit stops.

Direct Business and Employee Outreach – April 2023

The project’s technical staff conducted direct outreach to businesses in both study areas in April 2023 with the goal of promoting responses to the project survey and gathering additional feedback on current parking and transportation needs for businesses and their employees. The team spoke with and left flyers at eight businesses in the downtown study area and gathered more specific feedback from businesses and employees as listed below.

Ocean Springs Tech, Inc.

Ocean Springs Tech, Inc. is a pool supply and service business located on Two Bunch Palms Trail in the Cannabis Corridor. Employees of the business noted that traffic lines up on Two Bunch Palms Trail to Little Morongo and

equally in the other direction around the time of the shift change of another business on weekdays between 1 pm and 2 pm, which blocks access to Ocean Springs and obstructs visibility for anyone crossing the street. They have observed vehicles making U-turns in the middle of the street and other drivers moving at high speeds, and suggested installation of a median in the center of the road to prevent illegal U-turns and preserve business access.

They were concerned about the quality of pavement on nearby streets. They also thought sidewalks are important, but they were not interested in new street lighting (unless designed to preserve the view of the night sky). They and have observed employees biking to other businesses despite weather-related challenges, and they assumed these employees got a ride from someone or used a rideshare service when unable to bike.

Ocean Springs Tech. does not experience any parking challenges and would still provide the same amount of off-street parking even if it were not required. They would like the curb space to be paved so parking could be allowed on the street in front of their business. All of their employees live within the Coachella Valley, and most live in DHS and Palm Springs. Service employees work between 5am-1pm, and administrative employees work between 7 am - 4:30 pm.

Employees were not aware of regional rideshare incentive or vanpool programs and did not think that they would use them due to obligations before or after work, but they would be open to learning more about them if a coordinator reached out to them. One employee had previously worked for an employer that increased hourly pay by one dollar for employees who did not drive alone to work and noted that this was a significant incentive promoting sustainable commuting.

Cabot Road Contacts

The team spoke with two individuals who were working on Cabot Road in the Cannabis Corridor area. The first, a food vendor, had observed people carpooling to Cabot Road or taking a Lyft or Uber, as well as people biking DreamFields. She was unfamiliar with SunRide microtransit, rideshare incentives, or vanpool programs. She had observed crashes on the street and recommended new stop signs and pedestrian crossing areas to improve safety. She had seen employees having to exit their business facilities to smoke and noted that safe pedestrian infrastructure would also help protect these employees.

The second individual was a contractor with approximately 15 employees working for him, all of whom commuted from Victorville. He organized their commutes and ride sharing, and although he had not heard of official vanpooling programs, he was thinking of purchasing his own van for his employees and business. Active transportation was not feasible for his employees due to the commute distances.

DreamFields

DreamFields is a large cannabis grower/manufacturer located on Two Bunch Palms Trail. Four employees were interviewed as they waited to enter the facility's parking area. Some key takeaways from the conversations included:

- Employees arrive up to an hour ahead of their shifts to wait in their cars in line to enter the DreamFields parking area.
- Employees were generally unaware of SunRide micro transit or regional commuter incentive programs.
- Employees were generally not interested in bicycling due to the area's weather and long commute distances, but they were either interested in or currently carpooled with other employees.

- One employee suggested creation of a separate entrance to enter/exit the facility.
- Employees who arrived closer to the beginning of their shifts would typically park on Two Bunch Palms Trail to avoid waiting in line.
- Employees were generally open to visiting the Downtown District but did not feel like they had a reason to do so. They noted the lack of green space and parks.

Business Owner Email Comments

Finally, the technical team received two email comments from business owners:

- The first emphasized wanting to have a downtown area that is safe and family-friendly.
- The second email suggested installing diagonal parking on Two Bunch Palms Trail and implementing traffic calming measures. The respondent also suggested that a controlled pedestrian crossing would be needed, and that the cannabis facilities with shifts should copy what's done to manage traffic at factories that also have large shift changes.

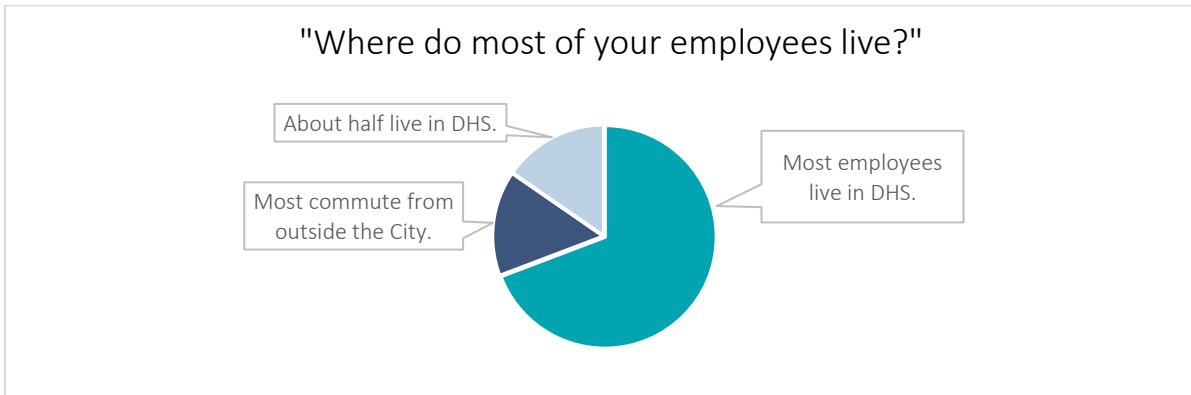
Business Licensees Survey – April-May 2023

The technical team developed a digital survey that was available to the public from April 19 to May 12, 2023. Although most of the survey was aimed at the general public, it also included a set of questions addressing the parking needs of business owners/managers. The survey received 14 responses from individuals who self-identified as business owners. The complete results from the business-focused survey questions are provided in Appendix B; key findings are summarized below.

Survey respondents work for or own a variety of business types, including food and beverage, professional services, commercial retail, logistics/shopping, and cannabis cultivation and manufacturing. Most respondents' businesses have 50 or fewer employees, two have between 100 and 150, and one has between 450 and 500.

As shown in Figure 21, *approximately 70 percent of respondents reported that most of their employees live within Desert Hot Springs*, about 15 percent reported that most employees commute from outside the City, and about 15 percent reported an approximately 50/50 split. If the City wishes to reduce parking demand and promote sustainable options, some employees who live outside the City may be potential candidates for shared mobility programs, such as SolVan Vanpool, while some employees who live within the City may be interested in using active transportation options, such as e-bikes, for some of their trips.

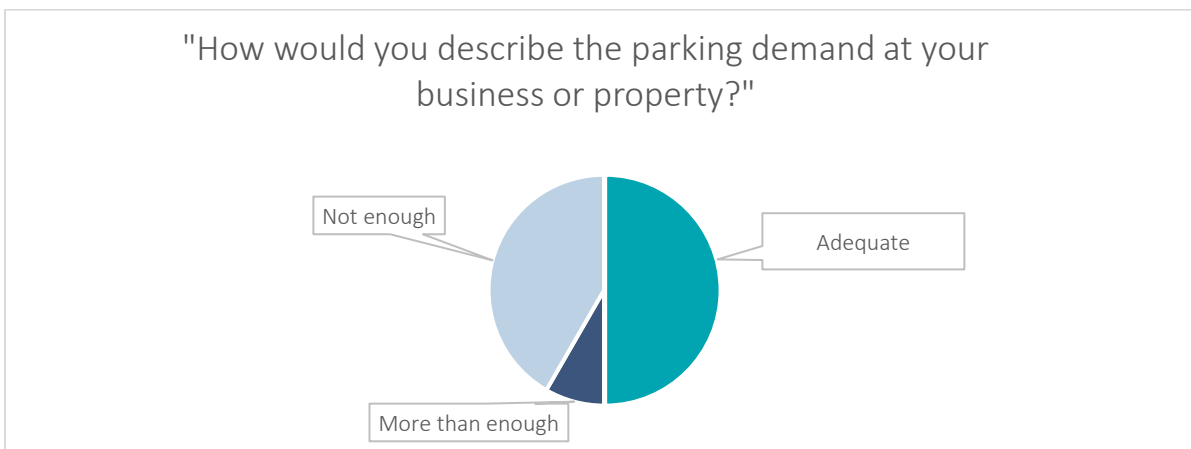
Figure 21: Business Licensee Survey Respondents’ Employee Home Locations



Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

As shown in Figure 22, most respondents (58 percent) reported adequate or excess parking, but a sizeable share (42 percent) also reported not having enough parking on-site. These results suggest that some City businesses may benefit from more parking options and flexibility, such as opportunities to enter shared parking agreements that allow private parking lots to be shared with other users outside of peak demand hours.

Figure 22: Business Licensee Survey Respondents’ Parking Perceptions



Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

When asked about situations that impact parking demand at their businesses, four respondents noted that employees operate on shift schedules, two people noted parking demand from food pickup/delivery, one person noted high numbers of employees coming and going throughout the day, and one person noted other cannabis-related activity. These results provide insight into potential parking management needs; for example, staggered shifts can help increase the efficiency with which existing parking resources are used.

Desired Policy Adjustments

In addition to the general questions about existing conditions at businesses, the survey also contained several questions about potential policy or infrastructure changes that could help address parking and transportation needs for employees. Business-owning respondents were asked to rank each of seven initiatives listed below from “not helpful” to “very helpful.”

1. More flexible parking standards that allow businesses to share parking or provide less parking.
2. Rideshare matching initiatives or incentives that encourage employee carpooling or vanpooling.
3. Upgraded transit service (more frequent service, expanded service hours or days).
4. Adjustments to SunRide, SunTransit’s on-demand microtransit service, such as expanding its service area.
5. Shuttles between my business and other areas of the City.
6. Improved bike lanes that help local residents commute to work on bicycles/scooters.
7. Incentives to promote sustainable transportation choices (such as rebates for e-bike purchases).

Survey respondents expressed support for the options presented; **all seven options were seen by the majority of survey respondents as at least “somewhat helpful.”** However, Option 6 and Option 7—which focused on *bicycle infrastructure and sustainable travel incentives*—were the most likely to be selected as “very helpful.” This makes sense in light of the other results, showing that most businesses reported most of their employees live within the City boundaries (within biking distance) and showing that most businesses are of a relatively modest size (decreasing the likelihood of effective rideshare matching). However, even if Options 6 and 7 are seen as likely to be “very helpful” for the greatest number of business owners, other options such as rideshare matching may be equally important to pursue, if they would benefit businesses with large numbers of employees who currently drive to work alone.

Summary of Key Takeaways from Key Stakeholder Outreach

Table 7 below summarizes key takeaways from the civic, business, and interagency outreach completed for the project.

Table 7: Civic, Business, and Interagency Outreach Key Takeaways

Audience	Key Takeaways
RCTC Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a regional agency, RCTC is not closely involved in initiatives to reduce parking demand in Desert Hot Springs, but they support the work of agencies that do. • SunLine Transit and IE Commuter are most relevant to reducing parking demand in Desert Hot Springs.
SunLine Transit Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency is actively working to improve transit service to Desert Hot Springs and expand the SolVan program.

- Fixed route transit is challenging to provide in Desert Hot Springs, but the agency is interested in collaborating with the City as new development occurs.
- SunRide Transit has already implemented an expansion of its micro transit service, which is one of the options that businesses broadly supported.

**Desert Hot Springs
 Planning Staff**

- City of Desert Hot Springs staff are actively engaging in efforts to support economic development, better define parking needs at businesses located in the city, and analyzing lessons learned from other cities to apply them.

IE Commuter

- IE Commuter is actively engaged in reducing single occupancy trips throughout the Coachella Valley and in Desert Hot Springs.
- Most employers in the city are too small to be subject to regulations imposed by the AQMD, but continued efforts to increase awareness of and participation in shared mobility options could reduce parking demand in the city.

**Downtown Steering
 Committee**

- Desert Hot Springs’ business community is active and engaged in efforts to promote a more vibrant and economically productive city.
- Business owners and representatives seemed supportive of the relaxation of parking requirements in the downtown area, as well as infrastructure that would support active transportation use such as bicycle lanes.

**Student-Led
 Downtown Vision
 Outreach**

- There is support for parking and zoning strategies that facilitate downtown development and more flexible land use.
- Community members would like to see infrastructure that improves connectivity, comfort, and safety for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

**Direct Business
 Outreach**

- Most people are not aware of SunRide micro transit or regional commuter incentive programs.
- Community members—both DreamFields employees and others in the area—would appreciate solutions that save employees from waiting an hour to enter the parking lot.
- Some people rely on active transportation, but most people are not interested in commuting this way due to weather, safety, and distance.
- Community members are concerned about street safety, especially for pedestrians on Two Bunch Palms Trail.

**Business Licensees
 Survey Respondents**

- Approximately 70 percent of respondents reported that most of their employees live within Desert Hot Springs.

- Most respondents reported adequate or excess parking, but a sizeable share also reported not having enough parking on-site.
- Policy solutions focused on **bicycle infrastructure** and **sustainable travel incentives** were the most likely to be seen as “very helpful.”
- Respondents also generally supported the following policy solutions:
 - More flexible parking standards
 - Rideshare matching initiatives or incentives
 - Upgraded transit service
 - Adjustments to SunRide micro transit
 - Shuttles between businesses and other areas of the City

Source: IBI Group and Walker Consultants, 2023.

Overview of General Public Outreach

The outreach completed with the general public included a mixture of community meetings using Microsoft Teams, impromptu in-person engagement, and planned in-person engagement. Table 8 summarizes the outreach efforts that engaged the wider community of Desert Hot Springs.

Table 8: General Public Outreach Activities Overview

Meeting/Outreach Type	Date(s)	Audience
Desert Hot Springs Holiday Parade	December 10, 2022	Parade attendees/general public
Parking Survey	April-May 2023	Desert Hot Springs residents and visitors
Direct Employee Outreach	April 26, 2023	Employees of businesses located in Desert Hot Springs
Community Meeting 1	May 4, 2023	Desert Hot Springs residents
Community Meeting 2	May 6, 2023	Desert Hot Springs residents

Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Feedback Received – General Public

Desert Hot Springs Holiday Parade – 12/10/23

The City of Desert Hot Springs hosted a holiday parade and street festival on December 10, 2022. The technical team organized and staffed a booth to introduce members of the general public to the project and gather some initial input. The booth was situated in the heart of the festival area and was passed by several hundred attendees. The technical team held more than 30 conversations with attendees in both English and Spanish to ask them about parking and transportation in the Desert Hot Springs and to understand what they would like to see more of on streets in the city.

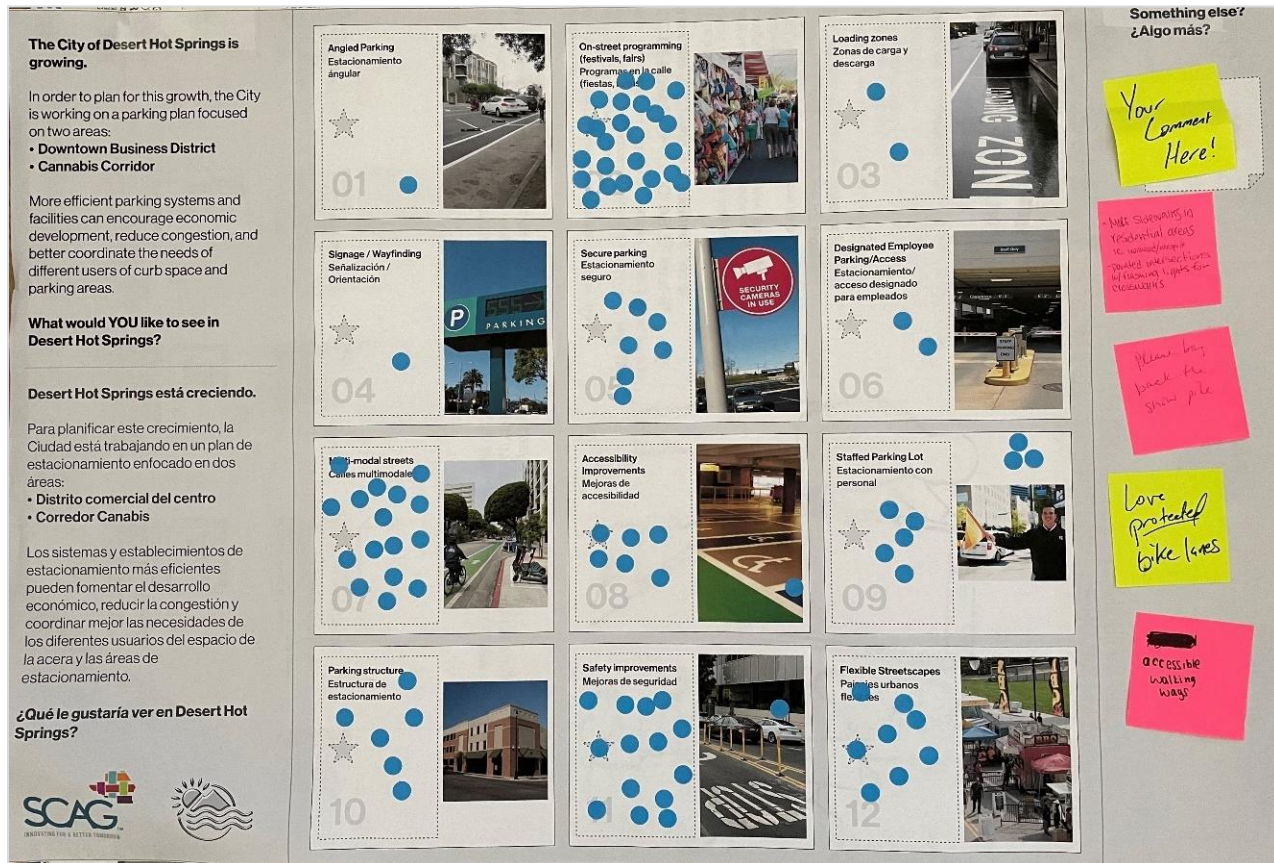
Figure 23: Photos of Project Booth at Holiday Parade Event



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Parade attendees who stopped by the booth were given three stickers to vote on the types of things they would like to see more of in their city. They were also invited to write an open-ended comment and leave a note on the board. A photo of the board is shown in Figure 24 on page 72. Table 9 on page 72 displays the number of sticker votes placed on each improvement. The top three priorities were on-street programming, multi-modal streets, and safety improvements.

Figure 24: Input Received During Holiday Parade Outreach



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Table 9: Desired Improvements Identified During Holiday Parade Outreach

Improvement	Number of Votes
On-Street Programming (Festivals, Fairs)	25
Multi-modal Streets	16
Safety Improvements	14
Staffed Parking Lot	8
Flexible Streetscapes	8
Securing Parking	7
Parking Structure	6
Accessibility Improvements	6
Loading Zones	2
Designated Employee Parking	2
Angled Parking	1
Signage / Wayfinding	1

Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Open-ended comments and suggestions left on the board included:

- “More sidewalks in residential areas, i.e. Ironwood/Mesquite.”
- “Painted intersections with flashing lights for crosswalks.”
- “Please bring back the snow pile.”
- “Love protected bike lanes.”
- “Accessible walking ways.”

Community Survey – April-May 2023

The primary method by which the team sought to gain feedback from the general public was through a virtual survey on the Maptionnaire platform. Maptionnaire allows survey respondents to answer question formats that are commonly found on most survey platforms (such as multiple choice questions or ratings/rankings), as well as to provide more specific geospatial (map-based) feedback. Figure 25 on page 74 shows the survey introduction page, and Figure 26 on page 74 shows one of the map-based survey pages.

The survey was available to the public from April 19-May 17, 2023, and was promoted through the City’s website, Instagram and Facebook accounts, physical flyers posted in the community, and both in-person and email outreach to businesses in the project study areas. Figure 27 shows the Instagram post promoting the survey.

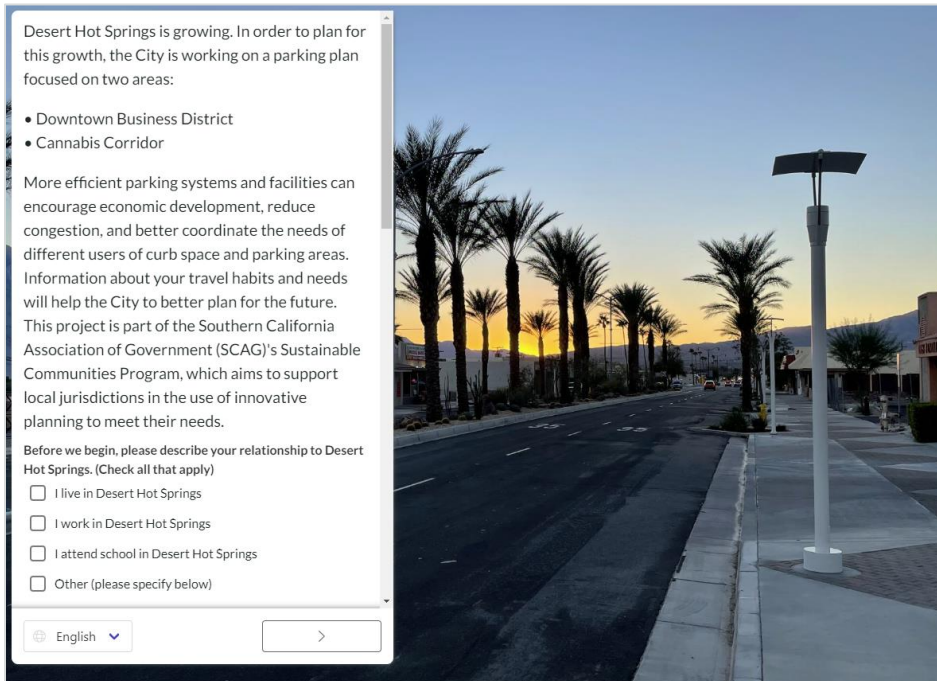
The survey received the following responses:

- 63 individual respondents began the survey.
- 45 respondents answered at least some of the survey questions.
- 18 respondents navigated the entire survey.

The survey was available in both English and Spanish, but all survey respondents chose to take the English version of the survey. The survey also included a separate section with questions designed for business owners or managers. The responses to those questions are included in the Business Licensees Survey subsection above.

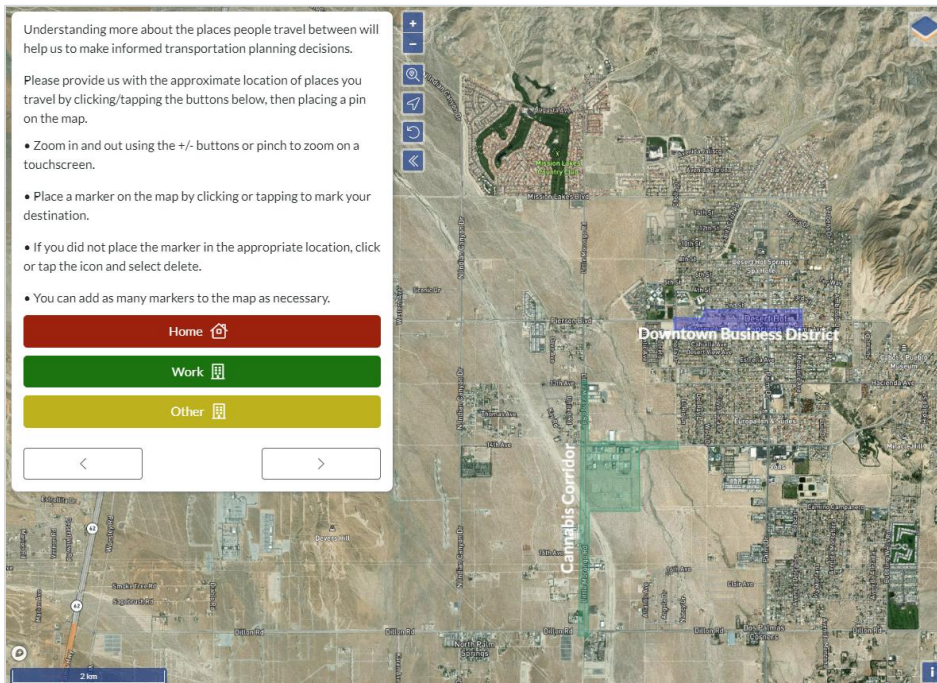
The survey asked respondents where they live, how they travel, about their perceptions of parking availability and safety, and about their interest in potential parking demand management strategies. The survey also contained several questions designed to gather feedback that has a geospatial element. Respondents were asked to “pin” locations on the map where they identified issues and where they would like to see specific improvements to address those issues. The full results from the community survey questions are provided in Appendix C; several key findings are summarized below.

Figure 25: Screenshot of Survey Introduction Page



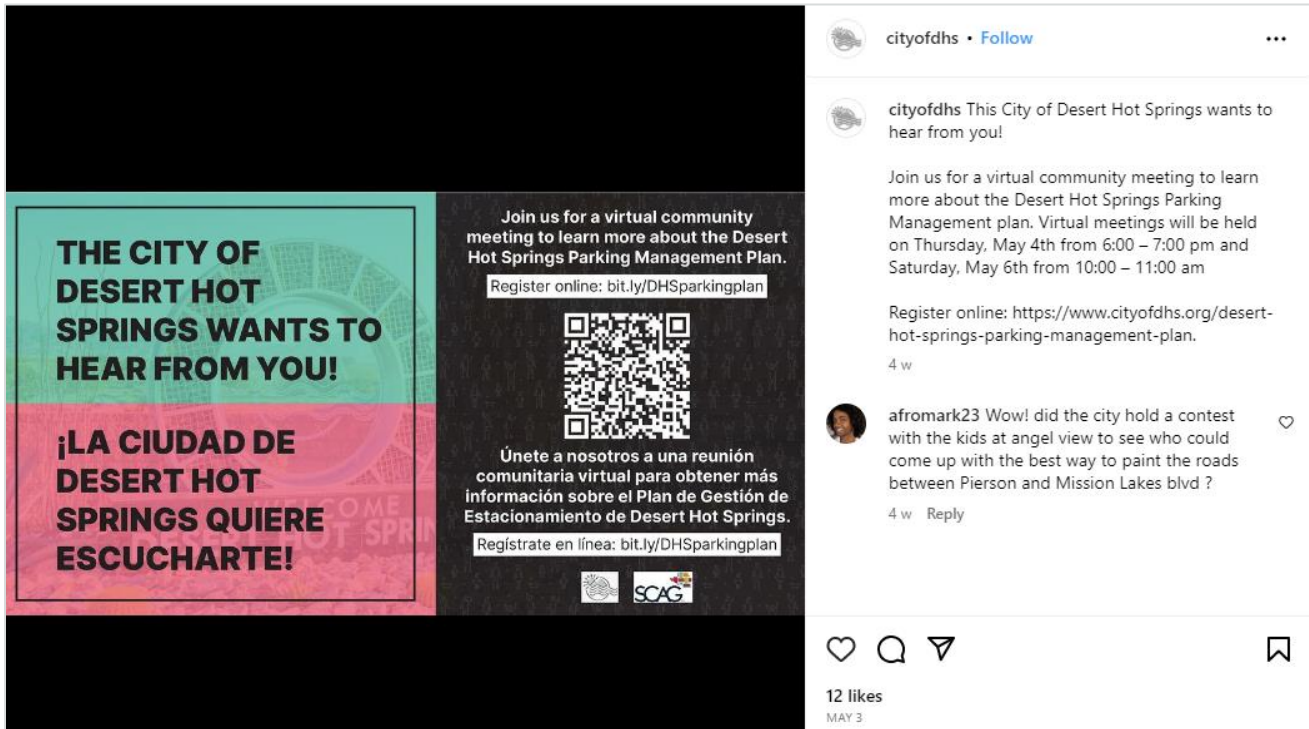
Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Figure 26: Screenshot of Map-Based Survey Page



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Figure 27: Screenshot of Instagram Post Promoting Survey



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

General Survey Question Results and Analysis

The first few questions asked respondents about their relationship to Desert Hot Springs and about their use of or interest in various modes of travel. Most survey respondents lived and/or worked in Desert Hot Springs. The majority use a car for their primary form of transportation; several respondents also walk, take transit, and use ride share services for some trips. Most survey respondents had heard of e-bikes/scooters, and were interested in learning more about them, but few respondents owned or had ridden one. *When asked how likely they would be to switch to an e-bike or scooter for some of their trips if the City provided safe bike infrastructure and secure parking, 25 percent of respondents indicated they would be at least “somewhat likely” to do so.* Although only 32 people answered this question, the results are consistent with feedback obtained at the Holiday Parade showing people’s desire for multi-modal streets and safety improvements. This input suggests that investments in bicycle infrastructure and parking may be a cost effective way to shift mode share to more sustainable modes of travel and reduce parking demand, freeing up additional spaces for those who prefer to drive.

The next few questions focused more specifically on parking—perceptions of parking availability and safety, perspectives on shared parking strategies, and connections between parking, land use, and environmental goals. The results revealed the following:

- Respondents were divided on whether it was generally easy to find parking in Desert Hot Springs.
- Most respondents indicated they generally feel safe walking to their parked car, but 25 percent at least “somewhat disagreed” that they generally feel safe.

- Survey respondents were divided on how willing they would be to park in a central location that could be used to access multiple destinations.
- Survey respondents generally did not believe that reallocating excess parking to other uses or sharing parking facilities among multiple uses were good ideas.
- Most survey respondents did not see a connection between parking management and meeting environmental goals.

These results suggest that finding convenient parking is important to people, and not always possible in Desert Hot Springs. The City may wish to consider parking strategies that prioritize maintaining availability of at least a few spaces in high-demand areas. Because the parking demand observations completed for this project did not reveal parking scarcity in either study area, additional community outreach may help City staff better understand the specific locations in the City and times of day where more effective parking management may be desired.

The finding that a sizeable share of respondents do not generally feel safe walking to their parked car aligns with the high share of Holiday Parade outreach participants who indicated an interest in “safety improvements” and, to a lesser extent, “securing parking.” *These findings suggest that some community members would appreciate safe pedestrian walkways that provide access to parking areas, traffic calming measures, and/or increased security at parking facilities, which may be accomplished in part by increased levels of pedestrian activity.*

Although more on-street programming was the most desired improvement indicated by community members who participated in the Holiday Parade outreach event, survey respondents were less supportive of repurposing excess parking. This discrepancy could mean that each outreach method reached a different audience; people attending a community event that repurposes street space for other uses may be more likely than average to support related initiatives, whereas people who chose to take a parking survey may be more likely to prioritize parking. Additional outreach could help provide context into respondents’ concerns about sharing parking facilities among multiple uses.

Map-based Survey Question Results and Analysis

Home, Work, and Other Important Locations: The home location question showed that survey respondents live in many different parts of the City, and three respondents live outside of Desert Hot Springs—in Morongo Valley, Palm Desert, and Redlands. The work location question showed that three respondents worked in the industrial cannabis study area, and at least six respondents worked in or near the downtown study area. Other locations that were important to survey respondents included the commercial districts of Palm Springs and locations along State Route 62, west of Desert Hot Springs.

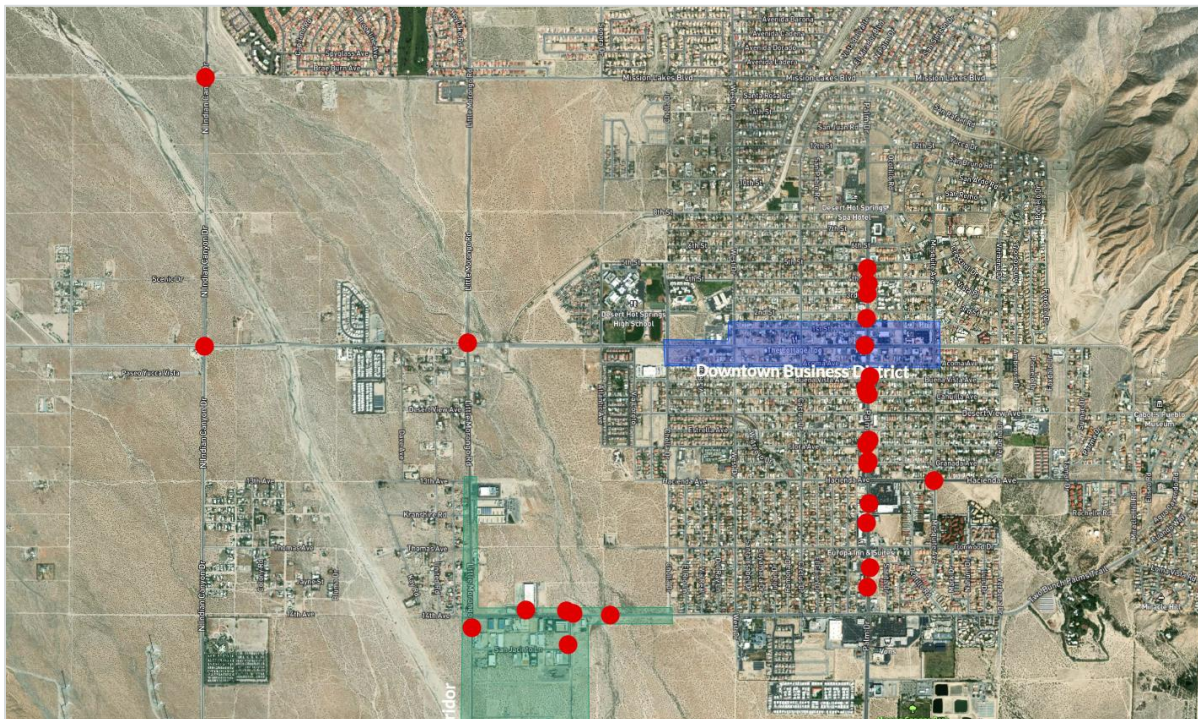
Issues Identified – Downtown Desert Hot Springs: Respondents were able to identify locations on the map where they had experienced a lack of available parking, a lack of clarity about where to park, unsafe driving, vacant or underused properties, unsafe crossings, a lack of sidewalks, or other issues. Figure 28 on page 77 displays an example of the map-based feedback received; full survey results are included in Appendix C. Findings for the downtown study area are summarized below.

- Lack of parking: Respondents found that there was a lack of available parking primarily near some downtown commercial businesses, with several pins placed near the intersection of Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

- Unclear where to park: Respondents found that it was unclear where to park at business located near Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard (where businesses have small parking lots that may be accessible from behind the business) and on the western end of the downtown study area.
- Unsafe driving (speeding/swerving): Most responses about unsafe driving were clustered north-south along Palm Drive. Some instances of unsafe driving were also observed in neighborhood streets along 5th Street and Hacienda Avenue.
- Vacant or underused properties: Survey respondents noted vacant or underused properties throughout the Downtown study area and areas farther north.
- Unsafe crossings: Survey respondents noted many areas that felt unsafe to cross the street, especially along Palm Drive. Other intersections where unsafe crossings were identified included: Indian Canyon Drive and Mission Lakes Boulevard, Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard, Little Morongo Road and Pierson Boulevard, and Hacienda Avenue and Mesquite Avenue.
- Lack of sidewalks: Survey respondents noted a lack of sidewalks in residential neighborhoods along Acoma Avenue in the Downtown Business District, as well as in some residential neighborhoods elsewhere in the City.

Addressing these issues will both improve the quality of life for residents and make the downtown area more attractive to visitors and tourists. Addressing these issues can also help with parking management, by increasing utilization of existing parking resources that currently lack signage and wayfinding, improving parking availability by increasing the share of people who feel it is safe to walk or bike to, from, and around downtown, and improving safety and security by increasing the overall level of pedestrian activity in the downtown area.

Figure 28: Issue Identified: Unsafe Crossings – All Areas



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Improvements Suggested – Downtown Desert Hot Springs: Respondents also had the opportunity to identify specific locations where they believed certain improvements would be helpful, including reducing traffic speeds, adding crosswalks, adding protected bike lanes, adding bike parking, adding sidewalks, adding lighting, and adding signage and wayfinding. Maps of each response are included in Appendix C and summarized below.

- Reducing traffic speeds: Survey respondents suggested reducing traffic speeds through the Downtown area, along Palm Drive.
- Adding crosswalks: Survey respondents suggested adding a crosswalk where 1st Street and Acoma Avenue intersect Palm Drive.
- Adding protected bike lanes: Survey respondents suggested adding protected bike lanes in proximity to the major downtown intersection at Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.
- Adding bike parking: Survey respondents suggested adding bicycle parking locations adjacent to the major downtown intersection at Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.
- Adding sidewalks: Survey respondents suggested adding sidewalks in the residential area along Acoma Avenue downtown, as well as in a few other residential areas to the southeast.
- Adding lighting: Survey respondents suggested adding lighting in the residential neighborhoods of the Downtown Business District, at Mission Springs Park, and in some residential areas in the southeastern portion of the city.
- Adding signage and wayfinding: Survey respondents suggested adding signage or wayfinding on either side of the main intersection downtown at Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

Issues Identified – Industrial Cannabis Study Area: Issues identified in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area are summarized below; maps for each question are included in Appendix C.

- Lack of parking: Respondents identified three locations in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area where there is a lack of parking, located at or in front of the DreamFields and CannDescent facilities.
- Unclear where to park: Respondents did not identify any locations in the industrial Cannabis Study Area where it was unclear where to park.
- Unsafe driving (speeding/swerving): Survey respondents noted unsafe driving consistently along Two Bunch Palms Trail in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area, with 14 pins placed on this street.
- Vacant or underused properties: Survey respondents noted several vacant or underused properties along Two Bunch Palms Trail.
- Unsafe crossings: Survey respondents noted many areas that felt unsafe to cross the street, including many in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area along Two Bunch Palms Trail.
- Lack of sidewalks: Survey respondents noted a lack of sidewalks throughout the Industrial Cannabis Study Area, primarily in front of undeveloped properties.

Addressing these issues will improve the quality of life for employees, reduce the likelihood of traffic injuries and fatalities, and make the area more attractive to potential business owners. Addressing these issues can also help with parking management, potentially increasing the effective parking supply by increasing the share of people who feel it is safe to park on-street or even switch to active transportation modes (including e-bikes or scooters) for some commute trips, rather than driving alone.

Improvements Suggested – Industrial Cannabis Study Area: Improvements were also suggested for locations within the Industrial Cannabis Study Area. Maps for each response are included in Appendix C; the feedback is summarized below.

- Reducing traffic speeds: A survey respondent suggested reducing traffic speeds in the Industrial Cannabis Study area around the intersection of Little Morongo Road and Two Bunch Palms Trail.
- Adding crosswalks: Survey respondents suggested adding crosswalks on Two Bunch Palms Trail, adjacent to the major employers in the Cannabis Industrial Study Area.
- Adding protected bike lanes: Survey respondents suggested adding protected bike lanes throughout the Industrial Cannabis Study area along Two Bunch Palms Drive and on Little Morongo Road.
- Adding bike parking: Survey respondents did not identify any locations where they felt bicycle parking was needed in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area.
- Adding sidewalks: Survey respondents suggested adding sidewalks throughout the Industrial Cannabis Study area along Two Bunch Palms Trail and Little Morongo Road.
- Adding lighting: Survey respondents suggested adding lighting near major employers and intersections in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area.
- Adding signage and wayfinding: Survey respondents did not identify any locations in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area that needed better signage and wayfinding.

Most improvements suggested were related to traffic and pedestrian safety, specifically along Two Bunch Palms Trail, where major employers are located. Respondents identified a need for reduced traffic speeds, pedestrian crosswalks, protected bike lanes, sidewalks, and lighting on this street. Many of the streets in this study area were still undeveloped, but it could be inferred that the same features desired for Two Bunch Palms could also improve the other streets when they are developed in the future.

Industrial Cannabis Study Area Employee Direct Outreach– April 2023

The project’s technical staff conducted direct outreach to businesses in both study areas in April 2023 with the goal of promoting responses to the project survey and gathering additional feedback on current parking and transportation needs for businesses and their employees. This outreach is covered in greater detail under the Direct Business and Employee Outreach subsection above, but an excerpt of feedback that came from general employees (rather than business owners/managers) is presented below.

DreamFields is a large cannabis grower/manufacturer located on Two Bunch Palms Trail. Four employees were interviewed as they waited to enter the facility’s parking area. Some key takeaways from the conversations included:

- Employees arrive up to an hour ahead of their shifts to wait in their cars in line to enter the DreamFields parking area.
- Employees were generally unaware of SunRide micro transit or regional commuter incentive programs.
- Employees were generally not interested in bicycling due to the area’s weather and long commute distances, but they were either interested in or currently carpoled with other employees.
- One employee suggested creation of a separate entrance to enter/exit the facility.

- Employees who arrived closer to the beginning of their shifts would typically park on Two Bunch Palms Trail to avoid waiting in line.
- Employees were generally open to visiting the Downtown District but did not feel like they had a reason to do so. They noted the lack of green space and parks.

These findings suggest that *the Industrial Cannabis Study Area could benefit from promoting shared mobility opportunities and commuter incentive programs at large employers*. Various transportation solutions are already available to employees, but people are not always aware of them. Opportunities and programs such as rideshare matching, cash incentives, vanpool subsidies, and micro transit have the potential to save employees time and money, while also reducing traffic congestion and parking demand.

Virtual Community Meetings – May 2023

The technical team hosted two virtual community meetings in May 2023 to provide an update on the project, report out on the technical work completed, and gather input from the public on potential recommendations. The meetings were held using the Microsoft Teams platform and advertised using the City’s social media platforms and website.

The meetings were held at the following times:

- Thursday, May 4th at 6:00 pm
- Saturday, May 6th at 10:00 am

A weekday evening and weekend morning were selected to provide varying windows of time and opportunity for attendees to join. The Thursday meeting on May 4 received three attendees. The Saturday meeting on May 6th was not attended by any members of the public.

In addition to the formal presentation given, the team held an open-ended discussion to gather input from the community on the two study areas.

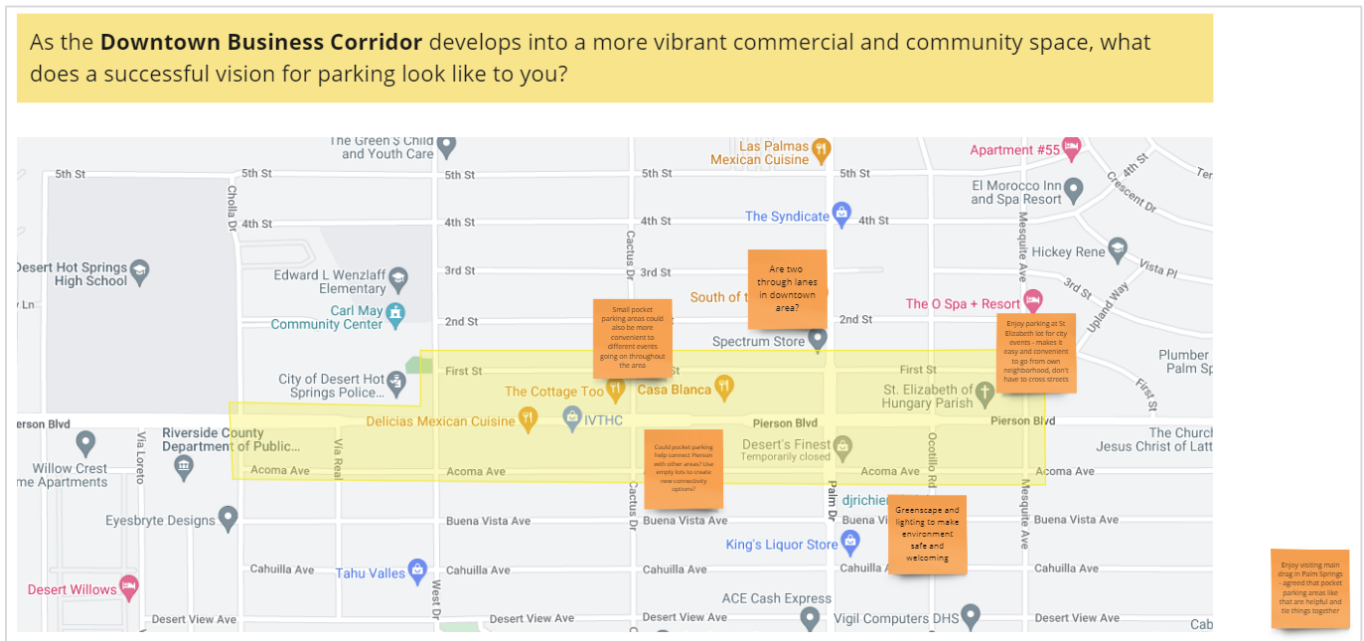
For the **Downtown Study Area**, the team asked: *“As the Downtown Business Corridor develops into a more vibrant commercial and community space, what does a successful vision for parking look like to you?”*

The technical team recorded several individual responses and placed them on a map of the study area, as shown in Figure 29 on page 82. Responses included:

- “Are two through lanes in downtown needed?”
- “Could pocket parking help connect Pierson with other areas? Use empty lots to create new connectivity options?”
- “Small pocket parking areas could also be more convenient to different events going on throughout the area.”
- “Greenscape and lighting to make environment safe and welcoming.”
- “Enjoy parking at St Elizabeth’s lot for city events. It makes it easy and convenient to go from neighborhood to neighborhood and don’t have to cross as many streets.”
- “Enjoy visiting main drag in Palm Springs. Agreed that pocket parking areas like in Palm Springs are helpful and tie things together.”

Participants were generally supportive of changes to parking in the downtown area and wanted parking to be one component of a more vibrant, active, and family-friendly place to visit.

Figure 29: Screenshot of Downtown Study Area Comments



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

For the **Industrial Cannabis Study Area**, the team asked: “As development continues in the Industrial District/Cannabis Corridor, what are your highest priorities for how people get to their jobs?”

The technical team recorded several individual responses and placed them on a map of the study area, as shown in Figure 30 on page 83. Responses included:

- “Not completely on topic but the hazards I see on Two Bunch Palms are related to how traffic is separated between driving through and turning into off-site parking. I know it's a two-lane road, but if these can be better partitioned, I would feel safer. Thank you.”
- “Need to identify major arteries and plan for traffic along them.”
- “West side of Little Morongo: turnouts could be developed with better signage - wayfinding and to slow drivers down.”
- “Need to better understand how people are getting to/from the area and other cities - which routes are they taking?”
- “New development south in particular will increase traffic.”
- “Welcome signage / city identity could be improved.”
- “Safe pull-out areas along major roads.”

Participants were broadly supportive of changes that could help reduce conflict between parking activity and pass-through travel in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area.

Figure 30: Screenshot of Industrial Cannabis Study Area Comments



Source: IBI Group, 2023.

Although attendance at the virtual community meetings was low, the community members who did attend provided valuable insights and ideas. Their comments were also consistent with previous feedback from the other community outreach and engagement efforts, highlighting the community’s desire for traffic safety improvements, better walking and biking infrastructure, attractive public spaces, and improved signage and wayfinding.

Summary of Key Takeaways from General Public Outreach

Table 10 below summarizes key takeaways from the general public outreach completed for the project.

Table 10: Key Takeaways from General Public Outreach

Outreach Touchpoint	Key Takeaways
Holiday Parade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most popular items that voting activity participants wanted to see more of were on-street programming, multi-modal streets, and safety improvements. • Open-ended comments also focused on safety and active transportation, suggesting more sidewalks in residential areas, safety treatments at intersections for pedestrians, and protected bike lanes. • Parents who visited the booth were highly supportive of efforts to make walking a safe option for their children by adding sidewalks and safety treatments at intersections.
Parking Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most survey respondents drive themselves as their primary form of transportation, but several use alternative modes for at least some trips. • When asked how likely they would be to switch to an e-bike or scooter for some of their trips if the City provided safe bike infrastructure and secure parking, 25 percent of respondents indicated they would be at least “somewhat likely” to do so. • Survey respondents were divided on whether parking in the city is easy and whether they would be willing to park in a central location and then walk to multiple destinations. • Some respondents had safety concerns; 25 percent at least “somewhat disagreed” that they generally feel safe walking to and from their parked car. • Survey respondents were less supportive of the more innovative parking approaches presented such as reuse of excess parking for other uses, shared parking between uses, and the supporting environmental/sustainability goals.

- Survey respondents highlighted areas on the map where they desired to see improvements, including:
 - Reducing traffic speeds
 - **Downtown**—along Palm Drive
 - **Industrial Cannabis Area**—Two Bunch Palms Trail and Little Morongo Road
 - Adding crosswalks
 - **Downtown**—at the intersections of 1st Street/Palm Drive and Acoma Avenue/Palm Drive
 - **Industrial Cannabis Area**—on Two Bunch Palms Trail, adjacent to the major employers in the Cannabis Industrial Study Area
 - Adding protected bike lanes
 - **Downtown**—near Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard
 - **Industrial Cannabis Area**—along Two Bunch Palms Drive and on Little Morongo Road
 - Adding bike parking
 - **Downtown**—near Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard
 - **Industrial Cannabis Area**—N/A
 - Adding sidewalks
 - **Downtown**—in the residential area along Acoma Avenue
 - **Industrial Cannabis Area**—throughout the area along Two Bunch Palms Trail and Little Morongo Road
 - Adding lighting
 - **Downtown**—in residential neighborhoods
 - **Industrial Cannabis Area**—near major employers and intersections
 - Adding signage and wayfinding
 - **Downtown**—on Palm Drive, north and south of the main intersection at Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard
 - **Industrial Cannabis Area**—N/A

Direct Employee Outreach

- Most people are not aware of SunRide micro transit or regional commuter incentive programs.
- Community members—both DreamFields employees and others in the area—would appreciate solutions that save employees from waiting an hour to enter the parking lot.
- Some people rely on active transportation, but many people are not interested in commuting this way due to weather, safety, and distance.
- Community members are concerned about street safety, especially for pedestrians on Two Bunch Palms Trail.

**Virtual Community
Meetings**

- Attendees were interested in using parking to create more walkable connections in the Downtown area, and to increase safety in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area.
- Attendees seemed generally aware that Desert Hot Springs is growing and will need to plan for that growth with adjustments to traffic and parking strategies.

Source: IBI Group and Walker Consultants, 2023.



05 Recommendations

Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter introduces parking management options for Desert Hot Springs that incorporate existing conditions findings, community feedback, future growth expectations, and the goals of the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG's) policy goals for equity, environment, and efficient use of the curb. As a young city with significant growth forecast for the coming years and a demonstrated enthusiasm for policy innovation, Desert Hot Springs has a unique opportunity to step outside of the status quo and take a more strategic approach to parking and access planning.

Every transportation system that requires a vehicle consists of three crucial components—the vehicles, the right of way, and the terminal capacity. For cars, terminal capacity means parking spaces. Many small cities in the early stages of their growth have simply replicated the policies of peer cities and standard engineering formulas that require an increasing number of parking spaces on every parcel. However, these policies and requirements have not considered the larger impacts and unintended consequences that such policies have. Traditional policies have resulted in a significant amount of public and private space in communities devoted to vehicle storage.

Driving alone is the primary means of transportation in every community in the Coachella Valley. However, this does not mean more auto-infrastructure is always better; on the contrary, it requires that we carefully size the infrastructure we plan, because it is highly space-intensive, capital intensive, and has implications for how all people have access to goods, services, public space, their jobs, and their homes.

Further, we know that how parking is provided has an enormous impact on how we choose to travel, because it increases distances between destinations (such as in the downtown commercial district with goals for walkability) and by making modes other driving more challenging to use, particularly for the young, seniors, and differently abled people. Research has demonstrated that these past policies have numerous detrimental effects, including:

- Increased driving and need for parking as a result of land use patterns and design that encourages or requires driving for most or all trips.
- Increased challenges for those who do not or cannot drive, including youth, seniors who cannot drive, economically and physically disadvantaged people.
- Significant added costs and regulations on the development of all property types, commercial and residential, creating a hindrance to economic development.
- Overall higher personal transportation costs for residents and employees in the City in the form of the costs to purchase, insure and maintain vehicles as a result of more and longer automobile trips.
- Increased heat island and other negative environmental effects.
- An inordinate amount of public and private space dedicated to the automobile including impacts on the design and the aesthetic of the community.

From an equity perspective, a transportation system that relies only on driving alone entrenches residents and workers in a cycle of automobile dependency, which has been extremely costly on both an individual and societal level. Often, households see no alternative but for every adult to purchase, insure, and maintain their own private

vehicle, a significant personal expense for those already experiencing financial hardship. At the city level, a transportation and land use system that relies almost exclusively on private vehicles also increases fatalities, air pollution, and housing costs. Parking can be an enormous expense for the city to maintain. In addition, excess parking contributes to environmental harms including stormwater runoff, habitat destruction, and urban heat island effects, and undermines social equity, community, and public health.

Parking is a crucial component of the transportation system; however, when we identify acres of spaces that never or rarely park cars, we identify an asset that is not serving the community, businesses, or residents.

Desert Hot Springs can continue to accommodate private vehicles while also developing innovative strategies to balance the extent to which they are prioritized and thoughtfully right-size the amount of parking that is provided for new development. Considering the strong relationship between parking policy, development patterns, and private automobile dependency, the City can proactively shape new growth and gradually bring about a future in which walking, biking, and shared mobility solutions are at least equally available, affordable, and appealing.

Community Input

Community outreach at the Parade of Lights and Holiday Festival revealed that ***many community members have a strong desire to be able to safely walk and bike*** throughout their City. Members of the Downtown Steering Committee shared this desire, highlighting a vision in which both residents and tourists would be able to use electric bicycles and scooters to access downtown. Community members and committee members also shared the ***desire to promote land uses that contribute to economic vitality***. Several community assets were identified, including:

- The hot springs and hotels
- Cannabis businesses
- Vacant properties with development potential
- “Hidden gem” hiking trails
- Joshua Tree visitors passing through or staying in the City

Transportation and land use planning can recognize the value of these community assets and help maximize their potential for the City. The Downtown Steering Committee also uplifted the City’s youth as a community asset, as ***children under 18 comprise over a quarter of the Desert Hot Springs population***. Planning efforts can make it possible for children to safely travel to and from school, participate in activities, and visit friends without relying on an adult to drive them, and can also increase the likelihood that today’s children have both the desire and ability to stay and contribute to the community once they enter the workforce.

Overarching Long-Term Vision

To achieve multiple policy objectives, long-term strategic planning efforts would right-size parking to serve the City efficiently and effectively, while at a minimum providing residents and employees with real transportation choices, balancing different modes of transportation so that more travel within the City could be shared, or accomplished by walking, biking, or neighborhood electric vehicles.² Throughout the state, cities are eager to become more walkable and bike-able to attract new residents, to provide current residents with the health and wellness benefits of purposeful and recreational exercise and fresh air, and to reduce automobile-related fatalities. The goal of improving multimodal transportation is particularly relevant for Desert Hot Springs, as cities that are safe for walking and biking especially benefit children, who are too young to drive, and lower-income residents, for whom private vehicle ownership depletes a substantial share of their financial resources.

A significant body of research has shown how large swaths of parking can encourage or force people to drive more and, in some cases, own additional vehicles. Surface parking lots create sprawl and consume vast amounts of valuable land, which cities would often like to use for housing, businesses, community amenities, and open space conservation. Developing strategies to limit and consolidate the parking footprint clearly aligns with City, regional, and state goals for economic development, civic space, transportation, and the environment. As the City pursues the goal of expanding transportation options, plans will still consider the perspectives of businesses whose customers and employees may expect or prefer to drive and park. Strategies should continue to ensure parking availability and accommodate private vehicle travel, while also helping the City gradually transition to support a balance of transportation options and more sustainable land use patterns in the future. The key is to provide flexibility and freedom of choice for people moving about, and to and from, Desert Hot Springs.



² As the price of cars become more expensive, and small electric vehicles, batteries and clean electricity become cheaper, transportation planners are seeing a future where NEVs become a real option and part of people's daily lives.

Summary of Parking and Access Recommendations for Downtown and the Industrial Cannabis District

The following recommendations are organized around six short-term strategies and three potential longer-term strategies supported by existing conditions findings, established General Plan policies, and community and stakeholder feedback. The strategies may be relevant citywide, but this analysis gives specific attention to parking and access opportunities in the Downtown and Industrial Cannabis study areas (as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 in the Introduction beginning on page 21).

Recommended short-term parking strategies include repealing minimum parking mandates, facilitating shared and public parking, discouraging private and reserved parking, incentivizing mixed-use and infill developments, and supporting walking, biking, and shared mobility solutions to reduce the demand for parking. Each of these strategies complements and builds on the others.

Longer-term strategies that may become relevant farther into the future include applying parking management techniques and then managing public parking based on demand as warranted, investing in new parking technologies, and establishing parking benefit districts. Table 1 outlines these recommendations. The strategies are not entirely new for Desert Hot Springs. **We note their consistency with the General Plan and appropriateness for each study area.** The following sections present an analysis of each strategy, including an explanation of how each could be implemented, the purpose of the recommendation, supportive General Plan policies, potential impacts for each study area, and high level financial implications and staffing requirements for the City. A more thorough review of financial considerations and possible funding sources is included in Appendix D.

Table 11: Summary of Parking and Access Recommendations for Desert Hot Springs

Summary of Parking and Access Recommendations			
Strategy	Consistency with General Plan	Appropriate for Downtown Study Area	Appropriate for Industrial Cannabis Study Area
<i>Short-term and Ongoing Strategies</i>			
Repeal minimum parking requirements	X	X	X
Facilitate shared/public parking	X	X	X
Discourage unshared parking	X	X	X
Allow for mixed-use and infill developments	X	X	X
Support walking, biking, and shared mobility solutions	X	X	X
<i>Potential Longer-term Strategies</i>			
Manage public parking based on demand	X	X	X
Invest in new parking technologies	X	X	X
Create a parking benefit district	X	X	X
Prepare to manage public parking with dedicated City or contract staff	X	X	X

Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

Short-Term and Ongoing Strategies

1. Repeal Minimum Parking Requirements

Explanation and Rationale

Parking in Downtown Desert Hot Springs is ample, with nearly two thousand spaces in the study area sitting vacant during the observed peak demand period. These spaces are valuable real estate and represent a capital asset as well as a potential economic development tool. It does not make sense for businesses to be required to build more than they think necessary when there is so much abundance.

The City's development code establishes specific requirements for how many parking spaces must be included with various land use projects based on metrics such as per 1,000 square feet of various uses. These mandates do not account for the cost to provide parking, the opportunity cost of the land and related economic impacts, and in some cases are not aligned with actual parking demand, which varies significantly, particularly in a downtown district. If too low, businesses can typically build more spaces than are required. But if the parking requirement is higher than what developers think is needed, the requirement can constrain new development and prevent entrepreneurs from opening or expanding businesses when a parcel is unable to accommodate the number of required parking spaces for their proposed land use. The requirements work against the City's economic development goals and the community's desire for a vibrant downtown by, in some cases, requiring as much square footage of parking as productive square footage. Repealing parking requirements does not require that less parking be provided. Instead, it creates flexibility in the development process, allowing property owners to evaluate for themselves how much parking they need. This strategy has been proven to spur economic development, in part by helping to facilitate the adaptive reuse of buildings or lots that are currently vacant and reduce the number of empty parking spaces in the City, a drag on the economy, tax base, and vibrancy of a city.

Minimum parking mandates also run contrary to sustainability goals, forcing property owners to subsidize car ownership and storage, which is inconsistent with the overarching General Plan vision of gradually reducing vehicular trips and miles traveled and the environmental, equity, and innovation goals of the SCAG Parking Bundle scope. Repealing parking minimums supports efficient land use and economic revitalization, as is demonstrated in some of the cities and their staff that we surveyed for this study. Relaxing demands on property owners and businesses to dedicate a significant portion of their property to reserved parking spaces, which often sit empty most or all of the time, provides all parties with flexibility in offering parking and access solutions, not just adding more parking to areas such as the downtown core where empty parking is already abundant. Flexibility in how parking spaces are provided and allocated creates financial incentives and savings opportunities for the City, businesses, and builders to provide only the parking needed, and for residents, households, and employees, to have options other than driving and parking for all their trips.

Examples of Cities that have Repealed Minimum Parking Mandates

As the benefits of reducing or eliminating required parking have become more understood, dozens of cities in just the past two to three years have repealed their minimum parking requirements. Cities have recently updated their development codes to allow for more flexibility than allowed by traditional zoning regulations, flexibility that promotes business. Some cities have eliminated minimum parking mandates for nonresidential uses citywide, others have eliminated minimum requirements for all land uses downtown, and still others have created an exemption for downtown commercial and public land uses. Walker researched and contacted staff members at several cities with flexible parking standards or that have recently changed the parking requirements in the development codes to better understand the rationale behind these particular cities’ policies, the results, and any complementary strategies recommended. The cities range in population size from 7,695 to 95,230 people. Their experiences with repealing minimum parking requirements range from somewhat underwhelming to very positive; no city reported any negative outcomes resulting from their policy change. These case studies show how the policy can work for small cities, including cities that do not yet have an abundance of transit or multimodal infrastructure, cities with extreme weather, including high wind speeds, and cities with significant levels of tourism. Table 12 below lists five cities, their populations, their changes to minimum parking requirements, and the year the changes were implemented. The subsequent sections provide additional information that was shared regarding the rationale, results, and complementary strategies used in these cities.

Table 12: Case Studies of Cities with Changes to Minimum Parking Requirements

City	Population	Year Implemented	Changes to Minimum Parking Requirements
Fayetteville, Arkansas	95,230	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No minimums for non-residential uses citywide Maximums for all uses Parking reductions available for residential uses
Laramie, Wyoming	31,659	2010; 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2010: Eliminated commercial parking requirements downtown 2018: Eliminated residential parking requirements downtown for 10 units or less 2018: Reduced parking requirements citywide
Wickenburg, Arizona	7,695	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminated parking minimums downtown Decreased requirements in other commercial zoning districts
Boulder City, Nevada	14,879	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminated parking minimums downtown
29 Palms, California	27,435	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminated parking minimums for commercial and public uses in the downtown commercial core

- Other parking requirements may be reduced 25% if parking is shared and posted as public parking

Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

Case Study Cities' Rationales

Fayetteville, AR:

- Nonresidential parking requirements were a barrier to redevelopment, especially in the city's downtown. People seldom applied for a variance. Fayetteville planners initially wanted to abolish parking mandates in just downtown. But no-one could identify a boundary for the reform that made sense, and citywide repeal seemed fairer.
- The City wanted people to have more choice and flexibility to provide the amount of parking that works best for their commercial projects and businesses.

Laramie, WY:

- Parking requirements were a barrier to development in the city's downtown. Even when a property might have received a variance, the uncertainty and unpredictability of the approval could be enough to dissuade someone from trying to open a business, especially small business owners.

Wickenburg, AZ:

- Existing public parking was not at capacity.
- Planning Commission and Council were presented with research and acted accordingly.

Boulder City, NV:

- Their downtown was already built out, and flexible parking standards were necessary to allow redevelopment and use changes.

29 Palms, CA:

- Eliminating minimum parking requirements was part of a "park once and walk" strategy established in the Downtown Specific Plan to facilitate development, in part by concentrating public parking in specific locations, part of the city's overall Project Phoenix to focus development incentives and create a critical mass of destinations in the downtown.

Case Study Cities' Results

Fayetteville, AR:

- Most developments and redevelopments still provide parking, but the flexibility makes more projects viable. A project that was viable when allowed to choose to provide 12 spaces would not have been possible if it had been mandated to build 16 spaces, according to the old requirements.

- A restaurant was built on a site that had sat vacant for 40 years, which had only five parking spaces on-site. Previously, the redevelopment would have required 41 spaces. Customers still show up; people are willing to park and walk to the restaurant (see Figure 31).
- Another vacant lot was converted into nine apartments, two offices, a smoothie shop, and a taproom (see Figure 32).

Figure 31: Restaurant redevelopment in Fayetteville, AR on a site that had been vacant for 40 years



Source: Sightline Institute, 2022.

Figure 32: Vacant lot development in Fayetteville, AR



Source: Sightline Institute, 2022.

Laramie, WY:

- Prior to the parking reforms in 2010, the city had about 25% vacancies in the downtown, and the existing commercial spaces had significant turnover, demonstrating that they were not necessarily the right fit for downtown. Now, the downtown is said to have no vacancies and more stability in the businesses. They have a mix of restaurants, breweries, general retail – outdoor equipment, clothing, etc., personal services.
- Even during the downtown’s typical busy times, there is usually a parking space available within two blocks. During events, people may walk six to eight blocks.
- Not only have more businesses located downtown since the elimination of parking requirements, but a few new buildings have also been built; property owners are able to maximize the revenue potential of their property.
- One grocery co-op relocated to a larger space with residential apartments constructed above.
- The past few years have been the “best ever” for the city’s downtown in terms of sales tax revenue. While these results cannot be attributed entirely to the parking code change, at a minimum, city staff said that the code change certainly has not hurt business.

Wickenburg, AZ:

- Some excess commercial parking is already being redeveloped into a building addition (see Figure 33).
- “We do have a large museum project proposed downtown and while it has not been constructed, they are going to be able to maximize their space and self-determine how much parking they will need rather than the government telling them how many spaces they need for their use. The whole theory of eliminating the parking minimums has been well received by the community. Park once, walk around.”

Figure 33: Building Addition Made Possible by Parking Code Update in Wickenburg, AZ



Source: Wickenburg, Arizona - Community Development Staff.

Boulder City, NV:

- Their downtown was already built out, but city staff credits flexible parking standards with helping keep retail and office vacancies low, even despite the pandemic and the development of a new interstate that bypassed their downtown.

29 Palms, CA:

- The new downtown plan, consisting of eliminating parking requirements and sharing parking, is bearing fruit. While its success in attracting new businesses and destinations can be attributed to more than the elimination of parking requirements, the plan could not have been implemented without the change. Benefits of the overall plan include the approval and imminent construction of a new hotel with approximately ninety-five rooms, the City of Twentynine Palms Visitor Center, and a culinary arts school associated with the local Cooper Mountain College. As a critical mass of destinations develop, the city expects more businesses to be attracted to the area.

Case Study Cities' Complementary Strategies**Laramie, WY:**

- The City owns one public lot and has a lease agreement for another large lot on the outskirts of the downtown area.
- The City is monitoring the effect on parking, and if it ever seems like it was a mistake, they would consider re-implementing parking requirements, but so far the changes are going well.

Boulder City, NV:

- The City has public street parking and public parking lots.
- The City highlighted the importance of signage and wayfinding showing where parking is available.

29 Palms, CA:

- The Downtown Specific Plan integrates shared public parking lots and pedestrian paseos to increase the acceptable walking distances between parking and downtown destinations. Shared public lots allow parking to be used more efficiently.
- The Downtown Specific Plan also recommends using off-site lots and shuttles for events.

Supportive General Plan Policies

The foundation for eliminating minimum parking requirements has been well established in the City's planning documents, as identified below. The policies the City puts in place regarding minimum parking mandates be the single most effective policy tool the City can use to facilitate many of these policy goals.

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **Policy LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.
- **Policy LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization.** Encourage revitalization of underutilized and vacant infill properties within the City closest to available infrastructure and community services.
- **Policy LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor.** Allow higher-density and mixed uses along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage shopping, services, and entertainment amenities in closer proximity to established infrastructure and transit services.
- **Policy LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification.** Encourage the intensification of commercial uses on underutilized and vacant commercial properties within Downtown and along the Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive corridors.
- **Policy LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources.** Maximize revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources.
- **Policy LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments.** Accommodate outdoor cafes and neighborhood-serving uses as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and commercial center vitality.
- **Policy LU-8.3: Protect Industrial Uses.** Limit non-industrial uses within industrially designated areas to protect the viability of those areas for industrial businesses.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development.** Prioritize business attraction and retention of employment and revenue-generating uses on industrial land.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.
- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.

Economic Development Element Policies

- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.
- **Policy ED-2.3: Streamline Permit Process.** Maintain a development permitting process that provides clarity, consistency, and assistance opportunities for new businesses and existing businesses looking to expand.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

The downtown study area contains approximately 1,800 parking spaces, including approximately 800 on-street spaces at the curb and approximately 1,000 off-street spaces, not including single family home driveways and garages or parking lots with fewer than five spaces. Observations revealed that overall parking occupancy for all on and off-street spaces in the downtown study area was relatively evenly distributed and ranged from 12 percent to 18 percent—always well below the 85 percent occupancy target. Many parcels are currently vacant, and a vast amount of parking is available downtown, even during the busiest times. Figure 34 displays an image of an underutilized downtown private parking lot.

Figure 34: Underutilized Downtown Parking Lot



Source: Google Maps Street View, 2023.

Interpreted another way, we estimate that this parking occupancy rate demonstrates that typically there are about 8.5 acres of unutilized parking spaces in the commercial core. This unutilized land represents a wasted asset but also a great opportunity for the City and businesses.

Short-term impact: If repealing minimum parking requirements streamlines the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and facilitates redevelopment over existing surface parking lots, this would support the General Plan goals for economic development, density, and commercial intensification while also improving the visual character of the downtown. In the short-term, it could also result in more efficient use of the area’s existing parking resources.

Long-term impact: In the much longer term, if parking were ever to become scarce, this would increase demand for a variety of sustainable transportation options, and potentially even create a source of revenue for the City. The need for greater transportation choice for residents, customers, and employees would become even more apparent. Curb space is a valuable public asset, and in the process of managing parking demand, many successful downtowns end up collecting revenue as a beneficial byproduct, which creates new jobs in the area and supports community amenities—such as active transportation infrastructure, aesthetic improvements such as street trees and landscaping, public Wi-Fi, and clean-and-safe programs—which further increase the attractiveness of the downtown area for new businesses and also encourage residents and visitors to use sustainable transportation whenever possible, creating a virtuous cycle. The result is an attractive civic and commercial space. Opportunities for the use of potential revenue are analyzed in greater depth in the longer-term strategies section.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

Industrial cannabis is a relatively new land use, and cities with minimum parking requirements are often unsure what the precise requirement should be, as each individual development has its own unique mix of uses and needs. Indeed, this is the challenge and problem of setting minimum parking mandates, as they are a rigid requirement for capital infrastructure, the demand for which may vary greatly on a parcel-by-parcel basis and over time.

If parking requirements are high, cities force businesses to dedicate land to an unproductive use rather than to revenue generating uses, assuming they have the ability to accommodate the required parking or are able to apply for variances, exemptions, or similar. As mentioned, particularly in employment centers, dedicating large amounts of land to parking also creates a large capital subsidy in favor of driving compared to other modes of transportation, many of which could be more cost effective than driving. If parking requirements are seen as higher than what their business needs, some developers may hesitate to undertake a lengthy and unpredictable process to provide what they believe is the more accurate number of spaces. If parking requirements are too low, property owners may simply trust what they perceive to be the City's expertise and provide only the minimum required. Without parking requirements, each new development proactively considers how much parking is needed to accommodate parking demand based on the specific activities of their business and anticipated employee schedules. Some business owners develop cost effective and creative solutions to reduce their on-site parking footprint (and traffic generation) while still meeting the transportation needs of employees.

Repealing minimum parking requirements provides the opportunity to free up unproductive land to increase the share of revenue-generating square footage on industrial land in Desert Hot Springs. Observations at existing industrial cannabis facilities revealed that even during peak demand hours, at some facilities, many parking spaces sit empty. Repealing minimum parking requirements may also create new local markets; if property owners take advantage of opportunities to financially benefit from sharing their parking facilities with other establishments when not in use, the overall parking supply in the area will be used more efficiently, effectively increasing capacity.

Detailed Considerations for the Industrial Cannabis Area

The City requested that Walker explore an appropriate minimum parking requirement for the cannabis production land use designation in the city as part of the curb management study.

Based on the empirical data collected, our understanding of the City's needs, and the goals of the study as directed by SCAG, determining a parking requirement for cannabis production was challenging. Nearly all the parking demand in the Industrial Cannabis District is generated by employees. Our goals for this effort are to establish a policy that facilitates the economic development of the area and provides equitable and sustainable access for employees to their place of employment. Consistent with these goals are policies that provide flexibility and choices for both businesses and employees.

Empirical Parking Data from the Industrial Cannabis Area

As shown in Table 5 on page 52 in the Parking Supply and Demand chapter, Walker collected data from eight properties in the Industrial Cannabis District, demonstrating that parking demand varied across the sites considerably. The highest ratio (1.88 cars/ksf) was more than seven times the lowest ratio (0.26 cars/ksf), after excluding the high and low outliers (4.96 cars/ksf and 0.22 cars/ksf respectively). The average for all eight properties

(outliers included) was 0.59 cars/ksf. This average ratio is still higher than the current one space per 2,500 sf (0.4 spaces per ksf) required for cultivation, the cannabis land use with the lowest parking requirement.

Different Land Uses within the Cannabis Category

The significant variations in parking demand ratios observed may in part be due to variations within the cannabis land use category. The definition of cannabis uses incorporates at least three different land uses, which have parking demands that appear to vary significantly per square foot of building space:

- Cultivation (with parking currently required at 1 space per 2,500 sf)
- Manufacturing, testing, extraction, distribution, and packaging (currently required at 1 space per 750 sf, which is 1.33 per ksf)
- Office – currently required at 4.0 spaces per 1,000 sf
- Warehouse – the warehouse land use has been identified as a possible “catch all” requirement for large cannabis facilities. The parking requirement for warehouse space in the city is currently 2.0 spaces per 1,000 sf.
- Dispensary uses were not included in this analysis as they tend to fall into a retail or similar category, which represents a very small percentage of the cannabis related square footage in the district.

Based on these requirements, the amount of parking needed for manufacturing cannabis is more than three times higher than the requirement for cultivation. The parking requirement for general warehouse is higher still.

A precise breakdown of the cannabis use square footage within these parcels could not be determined. To respond to the needs of their business operations, cannabis businesses may sometimes need to shift their built square footage between uses. This not only makes determination of the accurate parking ratios generated by cannabis land uses challenging, but it also demonstrates the problematic nature of establishing a parking requirement for cannabis facilities. Flexibility is necessary, but difficult when establishing a required parking ratio.

Establishing a parking requirement will, in many instances, result in more parking than needed being required, limiting the productive square footage of the sites (and therefore the ability of each site to generate the per-square-foot cannabis tax). As noted, the requirement also reduces flexibility.

We note that there has been mounting, and unrefuted evidence in planning and development circles that minimum parking requirements constrain businesses and development. Further, requirements incentivize employees to drive at the expense of other modes of transportation, from carpooling (which we observed occurring during our data collection and in conversations with staff at cannabis facilities) to transit, bicycling and walking, and other modes. In sum, we see establishing one-size-fits-all parking requirements as not just problematic for businesses but as having negative consequences on traffic, emissions, and equity.

Additional Considerations

Concern over parking requirements in the cannabis industrial district stems from parking spillover along unimproved curb areas along Two Bunch Palms Trail. Our understanding and most recent observations is that this issue stems largely from one employer and has largely dissipated due to shifting employees on one parcel to another location that has adequate parking. However, a related issue to the same problem, significant queuing along Two Bunch Palms prior to shift changes has remained until recently. We note that new parking requirements

typically cannot be applied retroactively. Therefore, the issue in question is related to only one property of several in the district and will not be solved by a change in parking requirements.

Based on these findings, we make the below recommendations.

Strategic Goals for Parking and Access Policy in the Cannabis Industrial Area

We recommend a parking and access policy for the cannabis district that:

- Facilitates business and economic development.
- Encourages flexibility to address changes to business needs.
- Encourages equitable and green transportation through the facilitation of non-drive-alone modes of access including shuttles and transit, micromobility, and active transportation, and not just parking, which is land and capital intensive, and the requiring of which tends to be inflexible.

Recommended Approach for the Cannabis Industrial Area

We recommend the following parking and access strategies in the cannabis district:

- Refrain from maintaining a specific minimum parking requirement for cannabis uses in the district, as doing so imposes inflexibility, and potentially unnecessary costs, and an inaccurate requirement that may constrain business development.
 - To the extent the City is concerned that the lack of a requirement could result in parking issues, the City could require that a parking and access study be performed for approvals, in lieu of a specific or inflexible requirement. Such a requirement is typical for large or varied land uses, such as medical centers. Parking studies could also be required for developments over a specific number of square feet, such as 10,000 sf.
 - Based on the findings from our empirical data, we advise not to require more than 0.85 spaces per 1,000 sf if a parking requirement is desired, but again highlight that businesses could provide additional spaces as they see fit.³ Again, a parking study could be allowed to justify a variance.
- Reduce the demand for on-site private parking lots by pursuing the other, complementary strategies included in the next sections of this report.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

Eliminating minimum parking requirements can facilitate new development and adaptive reuse, increasing the economic vibrancy and generating new revenue for the City. An additional benefit may be that when new developments are no longer required to subsidize vehicle storage for residents or employees, the true value of public curb space will become more apparent, and the City may have opportunities to leverage this value to support priorities identified by community members and local business owners.

Repealing minimum parking requirements is a strategy that requires only a simple ordinance and involves relatively minimal staff time to implement. It can also reduce demands on Planning staff by streamlining the permitting

³ Six of the eight properties surveyed had parking demand ratios of 0.85 spaces or less. We note that five of the properties had parking demand ratios of 0.64 spaces or less. The two properties that had higher parking demand ratios likely had significant office components.

process for new developments. Should the strategy eventually result in higher demand for on-street parking, additional staff time will be necessary to develop a management plan and enforce any new regulations.

2. Facilitate Shared/Public Parking

Explanation and Rationale

The traditional approach to municipal parking regulations has been to require dedicated on-site parking for each land use. However, this nearly always results in an inefficient use of land that also degrades the visual character and environment of an area, as most parking spaces sit empty most of the time. Different land uses often experience peak parking demands at different times of day and days of the week, creating opportunities for shared parking in areas with a mix of uses. For example:

- Offices and banks experience peak demand during weekday business hours.
- Movie theatres experience peak parking demand at night and on weekends, as well as the second half of December.
- Peak parking demand at religious institutions occurs on weekends and weekday evenings.
- Health clubs experience peak parking demand in January, while most retailers experience peak parking demand in the week in December leading up to Christmas.
- Residential buildings and hotels have their highest parking demand overnight.

When each land use has its own private and reserved parking supply, parking usage data demonstrates that there is a wasteful increase in the total parking footprint in suburban areas, reducing the amount of land available for business activity, housing, community amenities, and open space. Some researchers have estimated that there are approximately seven empty parking spaces for every vehicle. If Desert Hot Springs can increase the share of parking that is publicly available or shared among various users, excess parking can be transformed, and valuable land can be preserved as nature or used more efficiently. Providing shared parking instead of dedicated parking can reduce the amount of parking that needs to be constructed by ten to more than thirty percent, freeing up land for more businesses, amenities, or public space.

Furthermore, when parking is private and reserved for a particular property, visitors are more likely to drive even when multiple destinations are within a short walking distance, such as in a downtown. All the additional private parking increases distances between businesses incentivizes or forces people to drive between destinations.

Shared parking gives visitors the option to “park once” and walk. The strategy encourages pedestrian activity by allowing many small parking facilities to be consolidated into larger shared lots, reducing the visual impact of surface parking lots and making walking more practical and pleasant. Some small lots, especially in the downtown area, may be revitalized as outdoor dining, pocket parks, and civic spaces. Alternatively, more efficient use of off-street parking resources could allow for the repurposing of street parking—facilitating beautification projects or improving safety for walking and biking.

To summarize, the two main benefits of shared parking are:

1. To allow for more economically efficient and community-serving land uses.
2. To enhance the visual character of an area and promote walkability.

Both benefits can apply anywhere in the City, but as later sections explain, allowing more economically efficient land uses may be especially relevant for the industrial cannabis study area, while promoting walkability and enhancing the visual character is especially relevant for the downtown. The recommended strategies for implementing shared parking in each study area also differ.

Why Shared Parking in Downtown Desert Hot Springs?

Based on our observations, it would be beneficial to consolidate the supply of parking in the Downtown area, through public action, efforts by the private sector, or a combination of the two, for the following reasons:

1. Efficiency: When different land uses share parking, fewer parking spaces are needed to accommodate demand. Shared parking is efficient. Based on Walker research, the reduced need for parking resulting from sharing spaces can range from 10% to more than 35%. This is a key reason to minimize *private* parking lots in Downtown Desert Hot Springs. Private parking lots necessitate that a district have more parking spaces than it would if parking were shared, and then those spaces sit empty most of the time. The result is less land devoted to businesses, other destinations, job- and sales-tax generating land, and housing.
2. So as not to create even more parking spaces where parking is already oversupplied: There is an overabundance of parking in the Downtown Desert Hot Springs commercial corridor. To the extent the excess supply of parking can be made available to nearby businesses or parcels, this should be allowed to take place.
3. Enhance the visual character of Downtown and promote walkability: Both visual character and walkability key ingredients of a successful central commercial and civic area.
4. Facilitates the removal of parking requirements: Shared parking facilitates the removal of minimum parking requirements, and vice versa. When parking is available to share, it provides options for business to have parking provided in locations other than on site, allowing businesses and developers to maximize the developable square footage of their property.

The need for fewer parking spaces also results in the need for lower costs to provide parking for businesses, and potentially residents.

Where to Provide Shared Parking Downtown

There are several ways – and locations where - shared parking can be provided in the Downtown District. Shared parking is already occurring using the on-street parking supply.

On-street parking:

1. At the curb: Approximately half the parking spaces in Downtown Desert Hot Springs are already shared, the approximately 800 spaces quantified at the curb. Many commercial districts rely heavily on curb parking turnover to accommodate customers making quick trips. A key advantage of curb parking is that it is spread uniformly throughout the area. Curb spaces are typically in the highest demand. These days, they may compete for space with bike lanes, although a wide right-of-way allows for both.

2. In the median: Public and shared parking can also be provided in the median. The width of Pierson Boulevard allows for the possible conversion of the median into public parking, a strategy identified by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo urban planning students in their *Desert Hot Springs Downtown Concept Plan*. Parking spaces in the median add to the parking supply, provide a flexible civic space for events, calm traffic, and provide parking along the length of the commercial district. Several other cities have used the median to expand their supply of shared, public parking:
 - The most relevant successful example noted in the Desert Hot Springs Downtown Concept Plan was in another Southern California desert city, Lancaster.
 - The much smaller city, Pismo Beach, also successfully created public parking in the median along Price Street in its inland restaurant district.
 - The City of Hawthorne replaced its median, a former streetcar right-of-way, with abundant public parking along Hawthorne Boulevard.

Like curb parking, angled parking allows for spaces to be distributed uniformly along the Pierson Boulevard corridor. However, these spaces provide less convenient access to businesses and destinations along the curb. Mid-block crosswalks must be provided to make median parking spaces conveniently and more safely accessible.

Off-street parking:

3. In publicly owned parking lots: Many cities provide parking in publicly owned surface lots. The land, capital, and maintenance costs are significant, and in California, historically were mostly covered by the now defunct Redevelopment Agency through tax increment financing. In addition to funding, the challenge of providing public parking in surface parking lots in linear commercial districts is determining locations that will minimize walking distances without devoting prime locations to surface parking.
4. In privately owned surface parking lots: Privately owned parking is typically the most abundant and evenly distributed source of parking in a commercial district. This is certainly true in Downtown Desert Hot Springs, where the private parking supply represents the majority of parking spaces. Through shared parking agreements, privately owned parking spaces shared and available to the public, or even to just a portion of the public (such as employees, who park in the district regularly and would understand how to find and utilize such spaces).

Based on a request by City staff, Walker created a methodology specific to Desert Hot Springs to develop a list of the recommended locations for the City to consider providing off-street public parking, if the consolidation of parking is desired.

Walking Distances

Based on decades of research, Walker developed the following standards, displayed in Table 13, for rating the walking distance from parking. These distances were developed with inclement weather in mind, such as the severe heat (and wind) experienced in some seasons in Desert Hot Springs.

Table 13: Walking Distance from Parking - Level of Service Standards

Level of Service Conditions	A		B		C		D	
	1,000	Ft	2,400	ft	3,800	ft	5,200	ft
Climate Controlled Walkway	1,000	Ft	2,400	ft	3,800	ft	5,200	ft
Outdoor/Covered Walkway	500		1,000		1,500		2,000	
Outdoor/Uncovered Walkway	400		800		1,200		1,600	
Through a Surface Lot	350		700		1,050		1,400	
Inside a Parking Facility	300		600		900		1,200	
User Experience								
Visitor/Customer	X		X					
Special Event	X		X		X		X	
Employee			X		X		X	

Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

Our Study Area in Downtown Desert Hot Springs runs along Pierson Boulevard, approximately 7,000 linear feet from Cholla Drive to Mesquite Avenue, and one block to the north and south. By locating off street parking facilities approximately every 1,000 to 1,400 feet along the Pierson Boulevard commercial corridor within the study area, we ensure that no off-street public parking is no more than approximately 500 to 700 feet from any parcel along Pierson. We also note the availability of street parking spaces fronting most parcels, either along the curb or potentially in the median spaces under consideration.

Based on this methodology, Table 14 below displays a list of locations in which to consider the consolidation of private parking into public parking facilities.

Table 14: Recommended Parking Locations

Proposed Location for Consolidation of Private Lots into Public Parking	Rationale	Method
Builder Supply site or	Along with nearby Saint Elizabeth Church parking, the lot could serve development east of Palm Drive.	Lease or purchase of spaces.
Saint Elizabeth’s Church	Along with nearby Builder Supply parking, the lot could serve development east of Palm Drive.	Partial lease of spaces.
66200 block of Pierson	Near Cactus Drive, south side of street, to serve that portion of the block. Density of existing businesses on this block.	Lease or purchase and new construction of spaces.
66000 block of Pierson	Mid to western portion of north side of this block coverage.	Purchase and construction for land banking or lease.
65800 – 65900 block of Pierson	South side of the street to serve both sides of Via Real.	Likely purchase and construction.

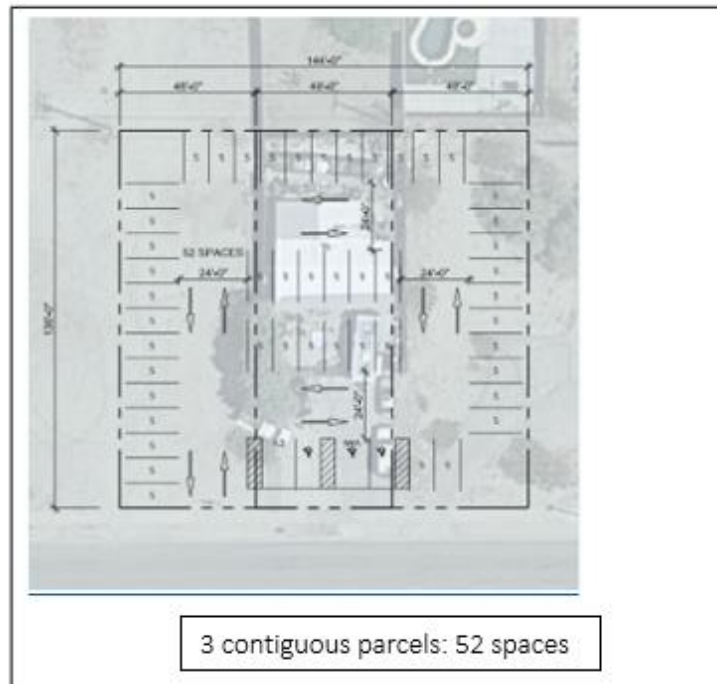
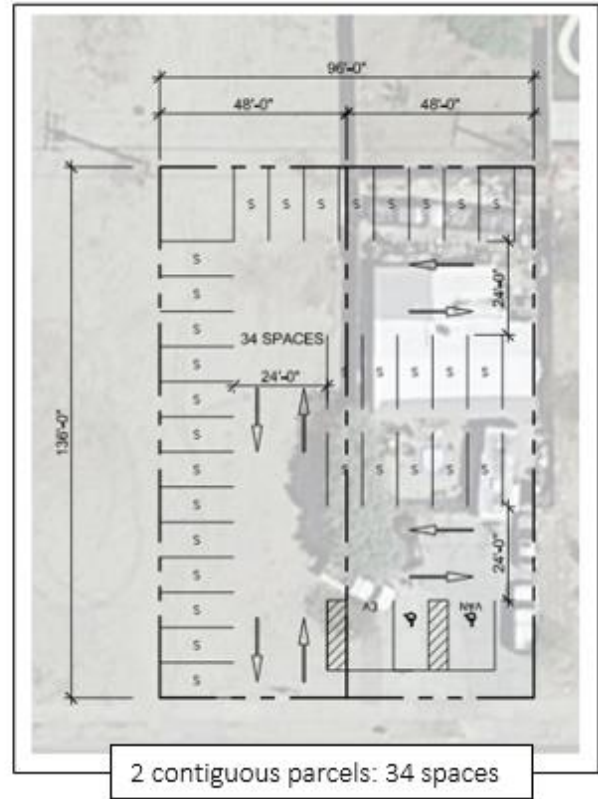
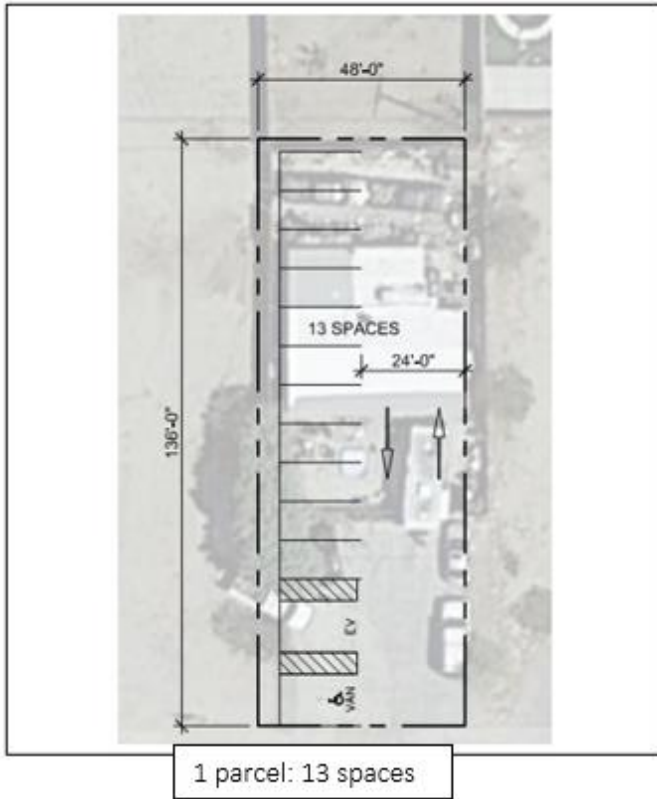
Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

Sizing of Parking Facilities Based on Downtown Parcels

Even with abundant and underutilized private parking throughout the study area, the City may wish to invest in the purchase, construction, and maintenance of its own parking facilities for any number of goals, including possible land banking, to maintain control for long-term future economic development efforts, or to leave open the possibility of constructing vertical parking facilities, if property values ever warrant such an effort.

Walker determined that typical parcels along Pierson Boulevard are 0.15 acres with dimensions of 136-foot depth by 48-foot width (frontage). This lot size is not efficient for providing parking, and infeasible for vertical parking. Three combined parcels could potentially allow for self-park vertical parking but would result in a highly inefficient design. We note that for the foreseeable future we view standalone structured parking in the area as economically infeasible and inadvisable for myriad reasons. Even as part of future development, including podium parking, the costs should be carefully considered compared to the economic benefits and policy considerations. Based on City of Desert Hot Springs code requirements, our layouts demonstrated a yield of 13 spaces for one typical parcel, 34 spaces by combining two contiguous parcels, and 52 spaces by combining three parcels (see Figure 35). It should be noted that these drawings and numbers of spaces are conceptual; the number of stalls may be lower due to requirements such as landscaping and factors such as utility access or other variable conditions that may differ by parcel.

Figure 35: Representative Parcel Sizes and Associated Parking Space Yields



Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

How to Provide Shared Off-Street Parking

Shared parking agreements may be:

1. City-sponsored;
2. City-facilitated; or
3. Between private parties.

A strategy to increase the off-street supply of public parking while promoting efficiency in the parking system is to develop shared parking agreements with the owners of private parking lots. Leasing of existing parking facilities, long-term or short-term, avoids the large upfront investment (and commitment) of purchasing property.

Municipalities often consider constructing new surface or structured parking facilities to increase parking availability. However, to the extent that some existing private spaces can be made available either to the public or even just to employees who work in the district, a shared parking strategy can increase parking availability and convenience as much or more than developing new spaces.

Parking lot owners may receive a fixed fee from the City (where there is paid parking, they may receive a share of parking revenues) in exchange for allowing public parking, management, and enforcement. Even more beneficial for property owners (but more costly to the City), the City may also provide owners with parking lot maintenance, insurance, signage, enforcement, and other security. Based on the data and findings from this report, the City of Desert Hot Springs can identify private parking lots that are underutilized during periods of high demand and consider arranging shared parking agreements with property owners. These could be parking lots in busier or peripheral areas or on the periphery, for public, employee or other long-term parking.

The City can consider releasing a request for information (RFI) or request for proposals (RFP) to all businesses or property owners in desired locations to gauge interest in a parking lease.

The elimination of minimum parking requirements facilitates the sharing of parking, but the City does not need to control the process. With the elimination of minimum parking requirements, property and business owners have an incentive to create sharing arrangements to benefit one another mutually. Parking is real estate, and one should always or nearly always expect some sort of compensation for the arrangement. Otherwise, shared parking becomes infeasible.

City of San Clemente – A Case Study in City-sponsored Shared Parking

Downtown San Clemente is a popular destination frequented by both residents and visitors. The core of San Clemente's downtown experiences parking shortages at peak times. When the City studied the parking supply, it was found that although the public parking lots were at or near capacity, there was a surplus of 400 spaces in the private parking lots. Rather than constructing new parking resources, which is expensive, San Clemente has developed the Parking Lot Lease Program ("program"). The cost is equivalent to maintaining a parking structure without the capital costs for the purchase of land and improvements. Put simply, the program opens the surplus parking in private lots by converting underutilized private parking lots to public lots, thereby increasing their usage and available parking downtown.

The program came about as a result of complaints by downtown merchants that there was not an adequate supply of parking in the downtown area. To understand parking dynamics in the downtown, San Clemente engaged Walker Parking Consultants to develop a parking study and survey that analyzed parking supply and demand. The survey

was conducted during the mid-summer, the peak parking demand period for this beachside community. The analysis concluded that the public parking spaces were heavily utilized while the private parking spaces, although in convenient locations, were not heavily utilized. The private parking lots were averaging 50% capacity utilization during peak demand periods. At the same time, the public parking resources (public lots and public street parking) were nearly 100% utilized. Walker and the City quickly realized that the perceived deficiency of parking in downtown was actually a lack of available and convenient *public* parking, rather than a critical shortage of parking overall. Walker recommended that the City increase its effective supply of parking by making the underutilized private parking lots open to the public. It was understood that 100% conversion of private lots was not necessary. Rather, the conversion of several key private lots to public close to the downtown core was the goal.

The challenge in leasing the private lots was to persuade property owners of the benefits of leasing their private parking lots. The City was able to identify several strong incentives that property owners wanted. Executed leases often included the following terms (refer to attachment 5 for sample lease):

- Rental rates began at approximately \$350.00/month/10 spaces (but have increased to keep up with inflation and other costs); and
- City funded parking lot improvements including slurry seal and restriping; and
- City maintenance of parking lots; and
- City parking enforcement (which owners are reluctant to do because they do not want to offend their customers); and
- City hold harmless and indemnify private property owners from liability resulting from public use; and
- Wayfinding signage identifying the private lots as public lots; and
- Lease term of 1-year with automatic 30 day renewal thereafter (short term leases are more appealing to property owners who are considering future development of their property).

The terms of the lease proved to be enticing to private parking lot owners. Since the adoption of the program in 2003, nine property owners have participated for an increase of 120 public spaces to the previously pool of 803 public parking spaces in the downtown, resulting in a 15% increase in the effective supply of public parking. Walker studies in 2006, 2008 and 2010 confirmed that the privately-owned lots that have been converted to public lots are now more effectively utilized (averaging 80% utilization).

This program demonstrates how downtowns can increase their effective supply of public parking without a large commitment of public dollars. This program is unique because rather than increasing the overall parking supply by way of physical construction, better management of parking resources is employed by making better use of private parking supply by converting private lots to public use. The program can be successfully implemented in other communities that have an underutilized private parking supply. All it takes is some City initiative in opening private parking lots for public use and then trusting in the ability of smart entrepreneurial property owners to see the benefits of the program.

City of Twentynine Palms – A Case Study in Providing Shared Public Parking as Incentive for New Development

As noted in our discussion of the elimination of minimum parking requirements, in the redevelopment effort of the Twentynine Palms commercial core, new public parking lots and a system of pedestrian paseos that connect these lots to businesses and other destinations in the downtown, have worked in tandem to allow businesses, the new museum, and a new educational institution to make full use of their parcels. Individual land uses consolidated much of their parking in these centralized lots, allowing for the benefits of shared parking.

Supportive General Plan Policies

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **Policy LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.
- **Policy LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization.** Encourage revitalization of underutilized and vacant infill properties within the City closest to available infrastructure and community services.
- **Policy LU-1.7: Infrastructure.** Ensure that infrastructure is integrated into the community concurrently with new development projects.
- **Policy LU-1.8: Lot Consolidation.** Encourage lot consolidation and utilize land assembly strategies and incentives to promote compatible infill developments.
- **Policy LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor.** Allow higher-density and mixed uses along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage shopping, services, and entertainment amenities in closer proximity to established infrastructure and transit services.
- **Policy LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification.** Encourage the intensification of commercial uses on underutilized and vacant commercial properties within Downtown and along the Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive corridors.
- **Policy LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments.** Accommodate outdoor cafes and neighborhood-serving uses as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and commercial center vitality.
- **Policy LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions.** Allow mixed-use developments to utilize shared parking plans, park once and walk districts, and other innovative and flexible parking strategies.
- **Policy LU-8.3: Protect Industrial Uses.** Limit non-industrial uses within industrially designated areas to protect the viability of those areas for industrial businesses.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development.** Prioritize business attraction and retention of employment and revenue-generating uses on industrial land.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-11.2: Cluster Development.** Encourage proposed projects within designated conservation areas to cluster development to provide for the greatest amount of conservation while respecting surrounding established and planned uses.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-1.3: Multi-Modal.** Aim to develop a multimodal and/or multipurpose approach when implementing infrastructure outlined in the Mobility Plan.
- **Policy MI-2.6: Rights-of-Ways.** Use available public rights-of-ways to provide wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trail facilities, and transit amenities.
- **Policy MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization.** Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- **Policy MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies.** Repurpose underused roadway space for safety, mobility, and public space improvements using low-cost, temporary solutions.
- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.
- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.
- **Policy MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way.** Seek opportunities to integrate mobility and infrastructure planning, particularly to efficiently use rights-of-way.

Open Space and Natural Resources Element Policy

- **Policy OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals.** Ensure that land use and transportation plans support regional air quality goals, with new development projects reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.

Economic Development Element Policy

- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.

Health and Wellness Element Policy

- **Policy HW-1.10: Amenities that Promote Healthy Living.** Encourage developments to provide access, facilities, and amenities that connect to trails, encourage walking, and/or provide for other facilities that promote healthy living.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

A shared parking strategy for downtown allows visitors to park once and walk from one of multiple central off-street parking areas. This approach can ensure ample parking is available while also allowing any excess parking to be repurposed for other uses, which has the potential to improve the visual character of the area and making it more appealing to new businesses. The following paragraphs discusses implementation strategy for downtown.

Public ownership and management: One common approach to shared downtown parking is for the City to purchase and manage off-street parking facilities to ensure spaces are available to the public and used efficiently. This could facilitate the redevelopment of small surface lots and result in a more appealing pedestrian environment for the downtown area. *Investing in public ownership of several key parking lots may be the most appropriate strategy for achieving the benefits of shared parking in the downtown.*

Public off-street parking lots could initially complement the City's 800 on-street spaces, and if the City successfully transitioned to a more multi-modal future, the lots could later be redeveloped into better community-serving uses. In the short-term, if the City purchases parking facilities for public use, while repealing parking mandates, development may become more attractive, and some potential small businesses may become more feasible and affordable.

Other shared parking strategies may become relevant and feasible much further into the future if there is ever sufficient demand for parking in the downtown study area such that people begin to see parking spaces as scarce and valuable. In that case, downtown business owners may partner with the City to attempt to increase the number of parking spaces available to the public by leasing additional spaces for public management and use, either all the time or outside of an establishment's typical business hours.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

The primary benefits of promoting shared parking in the industrial cannabis study area are to allow more economically efficient land use, conserve open space, create flexibility for changes of use that might need additional parking, and, in some instances, to accommodate parking needs during shift changes (with on-street shared parking). Additionally, establishments with parking facilities that are vacant much of the time would have the opportunity to monetize their parking. Promoting shared or public parking can help ensure any developments that need more parking or are interested in reducing their parking footprint have opportunities and incentives to pursue an appropriate solution. The opportunity to share parking is more curtailed in this study area given the limited mix of land uses, but even among similar land uses, shared parking is still possible and beneficial.

In the Industrial Cannabis Study Area, the City should (1) allow and promote shared use agreements between private property owners, and (2) make the existing and potential public on-street street parking supply safe and accessible to employees.

Private Shared Use Agreements: The City could help facilitate shared use agreements by conducting outreach to property owners and providing model agreements and administrative assistance for owners who wish to rent parking spaces to one another or to share facilities that are needed at different times (such as religious institutions with peak demand on evenings and weekends, and industrial uses with peak demand on weekdays). New developments will also have a natural economic incentive to explore shared parking opportunities that would allow their business to be feasible on a smaller lot or allow them to use more of their parcel for business activity, rather

than parking. The opportunity to use valuable land within the Industrial Cannabis Overlay more efficiently could make the area more desirable for development activity.

Making Existing Public Parking Supply Accessible: Before considering public investment in ownership of public off-street parking facilities, Desert Hot Springs should consider the approximately 1,873 potential or existing street parking spaces along the seven streets in the industrial cannabis study area. This represents a significant amount of land already owned by the City, and it has the potential to be an enormous public parking resource.

If these on-street spaces were provided in surface parking lots, they would take up over fourteen acres of land in the district, representing millions of dollars in land. If provided in structured parking facilities, they would represent over fifty million dollars in capital costs alone, not considering land and facility maintenance costs.

The City should first concentrate on making sure that on-street spaces are safely accessible, an effort for which the City should consult its traffic engineer, among others. The effort could involve measures such as creating sidewalks, developing dedicated bike/scooter lanes, narrowing vehicle travel lane widths, reducing speed limits, or installing speed bumps. The City could also install low level dark sky compliant lighting, or encourage the use of flashlights, bike or scooter lights, or head lamps to increase nighttime safety without significantly impacting light pollution. Infrastructure improvements that improve safety for walking and biking can also be included with new developments, a strategy further explored in a later section.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

There are several vacant properties that include parking for sale in the downtown. The City may invest in purchasing one or more of these facilities to increase the supply of publicly available and managed parking. In the industrial cannabis study area, financial investments would be focused on improving the safety and accessibility of existing and potential on-street parking supply. Increasing the supply of public parking in each of these ways would involve significant capital outlays, but the investments may be worthwhile to improve the economic vitality and overall environment of each area.

City staff time would be necessary to identify downtown off-street facilities for investment, develop a plan for cannabis area street parking safety improvements, and promote shared use agreements among private entities.

3. Discourage Unshared Parking

Explanation and Rationale

When each business or parcel provides its own parking, the result is often acres of underutilized parking spaces that sit empty much of the time. Right-sizing parking allows more public and private land to be used for economic activity, community amenities, and open space. It facilitates more walking, biking and other active transportation opportunities, and more affordable housing. Managing the parking footprint is a key part of the planning effort to accomplish these goals. To transition into a future with more efficient land use patterns, the City may begin simply by seeking to minimize the footprint of unshared parking spaces. The same General Plan policies that support a shared parking strategy also support a strategy of discouraging unshared parking so that parking can be used as needed. The implementation actions for encouraging shared parking and discouraging unshared parking are different but complementary.

Some cities have enacted commercial restrictions on how much parking can be constructed (parking maximum requirements) in their downtowns, with an exception for parking made available to the public, at least outside of the establishment's business hours, to discourage large amounts of asphalt that sit open most of the time. Some of these maximum parking allowances exempt any parking that is made available to the public outside of an establishment's usual hours of operation.

There is also precedent for establishing parking maximums, including those governing marijuana facilities and establishments, in industrial areas of the city. Some cities have converted what were previously minimum parking requirements into standards limiting how much parking may be provided. For example, the City of River Rouge, Michigan, allows the following:

- Commercial marijuana facilities and establishments: A maximum of 3 spaces/1000 square feet
- Industrial marijuana facilities and establishments: A maximum of 4 spaces/1000 square feet

Beyond the extent to which cost savings opportunities will already do so, parking maximum allowances could encourage developers to consider shared parking opportunities, parking opportunities off-site that could be accessed by shuttles or scooters, and available street parking, rather than paving over greenfield sites.

This study does not recommend strict parking maximums for Desert Hot Springs, but rather the more flexible strategy of soft maximums, which developers may exceed if they also provide similar benefits that will serve those who travel by other modes.

This more flexible strategy for discouraging private and reserved parking involves *requiring that transportation demand management (TDM) measures (such as shuttle bus services, vanpool programs,⁴ transportation information displays, multimodal wayfinding signage, secure bicycle parking, showers and lockers, a fleet of bicycles, car-share parking and membership, tailored transportation marketing services, or parking cash-out) be selected from a menu of options and included with new developments, according to the number of parking spaces proposed.* This type of Parking and TDM Plan would help offset the negative impacts of providing parking beyond current requirements by also ensuring the inclusion of infrastructure or services that support active transportation and shared mobility.

Often, cities that have implemented parking maximums simply turned their previous parking minimums into maximums, to better align with goals for sustainability, public health, and economic vitality. The City of Desert Hot Springs is advised to follow a similar approach, but using "soft maximums" that may be exceeded through TDM provisions, effectively to help "even the transportation playing field." This strategy will require the creation of a Parking and TDM Plan that establishes a clear menu of possible TDM options and the number of excess parking spaces each option could potentially mitigate.

Supportive General Plan Policies

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **Policy LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.

⁴ Such as those offered by SunLine Transit and the Riverside Transportation Commission

- **Policy LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization.** Encourage revitalization of underutilized and vacant infill properties within the City closest to available infrastructure and community services.
- **Policy LU-1.7: Infrastructure.** Ensure that infrastructure is integrated into the community concurrently with new development projects.
- **Policy LU-1.8: Lot Consolidation.** Encourage lot consolidation and utilize land assembly strategies and incentives to promote compatible infill developments.
- **Policy LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor.** Allow higher-density and mixed uses along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage shopping, services, and entertainment amenities in closer proximity to established infrastructure and transit services.
- **Policy LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification.** Encourage the intensification of commercial uses on underutilized and vacant commercial properties within Downtown and along the Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive corridors.
- **Policy LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments.** Accommodate outdoor cafes and neighborhood-serving uses as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and commercial center vitality.
- **Policy LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions.** Allow mixed-use developments to utilize shared parking plans, park once and walk districts, and other innovative and flexible parking strategies.
- **Policy LU-8.3: Protect Industrial Uses.** Limit non-industrial uses within industrially designated areas to protect the viability of those areas for industrial businesses.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development.** Prioritize business attraction and retention of employment and revenue-generating uses on industrial land.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-11.2: Cluster Development.** Encourage proposed projects within designated conservation areas to cluster development to provide for the greatest amount of conservation while respecting surrounding established and planned uses.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-1.3: Multi-Modal.** Aim to develop a multimodal and/or multipurpose approach when implementing infrastructure outlined in the Mobility Plan.
- **Policy MI-2.6: Rights-of-Ways.** Use available public rights-of-ways to provide wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trail facilities, and transit amenities.
- **Policy MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization.** Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- **Policy MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies.** Repurpose underused roadway space for safety, mobility, and public space improvements using low-cost, temporary solutions.
- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing

impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.

- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.
- **Policy MI-10.3: Impact Fees.** Ensure that impact fees provide adequate funding for necessary transportation improvements that will benefit all travel modes, while also incentivizing development that is less dependent on expensive, new transportation.
- **Policy MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way.** Seek opportunities to integrate mobility and infrastructure planning, particularly to efficiently use rights-of-way.

Open Space and Natural Resources Element Policy

- **Policy OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals.** Ensure that land use and transportation plans support regional air quality goals, with new development projects reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.

Economic Development Element Policy

- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.

Health and Wellness Element Policy

- **Policy HW-1.10: Amenities that Promote Healthy Living.** Encourage developments to provide access, facilities, and amenities that connect to trails, encourage walking, and/or provide for other facilities that promote healthy living.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

The downtown study area already has ample parking availability both on- and off-street, and the purchase of a public parking lot or lots—as recommended in the previous strategy—would further ensure that parking is available. In light of these existing and future conditions, implementing soft maximum parking allowances downtown can help ensure future land uses help make the downtown a walkable destination that attracts visitors and new businesses.

Requiring any new commercial or mixed-use developments to include transportation demand management (TDM) strategies, just as has traditionally been done for parking spaces, according to the number of private off-street parking spaces planned in excess of the maximums can help ensure that parking is not oversupplied and that negative impacts associated with off-street parking are offset by equally impactful investments in infrastructure and services supporting active transportation and shared mobility.

Development standards that recognize parking's impact on travel and land use and attempt to curb the growth of the unshared parking footprint in the Desert Hot Springs are key to gradually developing a sustainable transportation culture. Policy decisions made today can also help bring about a long-term future in which people are less dependent on private vehicles, and in which active and shared modes become more common place.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

The industrial cannabis study area is within the Industrial Cannabis Overlay, an area where land is particularly valuable for its economic development potential. As in the downtown, “soft” maximum parking allowances could help the City guide the industrial cannabis area’s economic growth and ensure land is used productively. This could further encourage developers to independently pursue shared parking opportunities, parking opportunities off-site that could be accessed by shuttles or scooters, and available street parking opportunities, rather than paving over greenfield sites or otherwise potentially productive land in prime areas.

Transportation access in the Industrial Cannabis Overlay area is first and foremost an exercise in facilitating employees’ access to their jobs. A citywide Parking and TDM Plan could benefit this area. Requiring any new industrial developments to include transportation demand management strategies according to the number of private off-street parking spaces planned in excess of the maximums can help prevent the oversupply of parking and ensure that any negative impacts are offset by equally impactful investments that support active transportation and shared mobility.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

Policies designed to regulate parking and increase the efficiency of land use, especially in key areas such as Downtown Study Area and the Industrial Cannabis Study Area, can bring economic benefits to the City. Regulations should not impede new developments but should create an incentive for developers to think creatively and consider alternative parking and transportation solutions that may work for their development. The only cost to the City for this strategy is staff time developing new ordinances updating development standards.

Initially, staff time will be needed to develop ordinances (1) establishing soft maximum parking allowances citywide, based on previous minimum parking requirements and (2) adopting a Parking and TDM Plan with requirements for the inclusion of TDM measures for new projects that include unshared parking in excess of the soft maximums. If the City provides developers with a clear menu of TDM strategies upfront, including the number of points each strategy is worth and the number of “points-worth” of strategies that must be included based on proposed parking supply, this should streamline the development review process and limit the amount of staff time required for implementation.

4. Allow for Mixed-Use and Infill Development

Explanation and Rationale

Another planning strategy that reduces parking demand and the demands placed on transportation infrastructure, and which also facilitates multimodal access and an improved aesthetic, is developing zoning standards that better support a mix of uses. This can improve proximity and access to different places, reducing the distance and segregation between different types of places, making it possible for more trips to be taken without a car. Mixed-use projects are often more economically viable to develop and can potentially generate additional tax revenue for cities. In many cases, it can make sense to allow commercial or light industrial development on a ground floor with residential units above.

According to SCAG's *Connect SoCal Demographics and Growth Forecast*, the population of Desert Hot Springs is projected to increase from 29,000 in 2016 to 61,000 in 2045, or by approximately 1,100 residents per year. The number of households is projected to increase from 9,300 to 24,700, or by approximately 530 per year. The City already has a plan to allow new housing, but expanding the areas where housing is allowed to be built could help facilitate commercial developments downtown and light-industrial developments within the cannabis overlay.

In addition to supporting project viability, allowing housing to be built over commercial buildings can support businesses by increasing the base of nearby customers. Currently, mixed-use development with residential uses is restricted or prohibited on most land in the project's study areas. Zoning code update recommendations for consideration include:

- Rezoning all Residential-Low and Residential-Medium areas of the downtown study area to Mixed-Use Neighborhood, which would also allow for higher residential densities.
- Legalizing multi-family or single room occupancy housing by-right as an accessory use in all Commercial-Downtown and Commercial-General zones, limited to upper floors.
- Legalizing upper-level housing units by-right as an accessory use in Light-Industrial zones.

Rationale for these recommendations is further explained in the *Impact on the Downtown Study Area* section beginning on page 121 and the *Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area* section beginning on page 122.

Supportive General Plan Policies

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **Policy LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.
- **Policy LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization.** Encourage revitalization of underutilized and vacant infill properties within the City closest to available infrastructure and community services.
- **Policy LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor.** Allow higher-density and mixed uses along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage shopping, services, and entertainment amenities in closer proximity to established infrastructure and transit services.
- **Policy LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources.** Maximize revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development.** Prioritize business attraction and retention of employment and revenue-generating uses on industrial land.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-11.2: Cluster Development.** Encourage proposed projects within designated conservation areas to cluster development to provide for the greatest amount of conservation while respecting surrounding established and planned uses.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-1.3: Multi-Modal.** Aim to develop a multimodal and/or multipurpose approach when implementing infrastructure outlined in the Mobility Plan.
- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.
- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.
- **Policy MI-10.3: Impact Fees.** Ensure that impact fees provide adequate funding for necessary transportation improvements that will benefit all travel modes, while also incentivizing development that is less dependent on expensive, new transportation.

Economic Development Element Policy

- **Policy ED-1.9: Cannabis Cultivation.** Develop a comprehensive strategy to position the City as the premier center for cannabis cultivation and production businesses and enterprises that support/complement the developing cannabis industry in the Coachella Valley.
- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.
- **Policy ED-2.3: Streamline Permit Process.** Maintain a development permitting process that provides clarity, consistency, and assistance opportunities for new businesses and existing businesses looking to expand.

Open Space and Natural Resources Element Policy

- **Policy OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals.** Ensure that land use and transportation plans support regional air quality goals, with new development projects reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.

Health and Wellness Element Policy

- **Policy HW-1.10: Amenities that Promote Healthy Living.** Encourage developments to provide access, facilities, and amenities that connect to trails, encourage walking, and/or provide for other facilities that promote healthy living.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

Allowing housing to be built over commercial buildings can support businesses by increasing the base of nearby customers or potential employees. Residents who have convenient access to downtown destinations will be more likely to visit, and do so without the need to drive. Expanding the areas where housing is allowed will increase the number of people who can take advantage of planned improvements to the walkability and bike-ability of the downtown. Furthermore, allowing housing as an accessory use allows commercial land to be used more efficiently and can increase property values without compromising the City's goals for commercial development.

One concern that may be raised is how opening up new opportunities for residential development in the downtown could affect parking availability. This is a valid concern, and one which underscores the importance of implementing the other recommendations of this report, as they are designed to complement and strengthen one another. For example, development standards can help discourage residents from owning more vehicles than necessary. Residential uses are also complementary in that they typically experience peak parking demand overnight, when the parking demands of other uses are at their lowest. If the City supports walking, biking, and shared mobility—including e-bikes and car share programs—downtown households with lower car ownership will still have attractive transportation options available. Finally, if the City is prepared to implement longer-term strategies, including managing public parking based on demand, making use of new technologies, and creating a parking benefit district, increasing residential density in the downtown is nothing to fear and will only increase the vibrancy of the area.

This recommendation aligns with the *Desert Hot Springs Downtown Concept Plan*—which was recently prepared by California Polytechnic State University students, in collaboration with City staff and based on feedback from community members. The Downtown Concept Plan also recommended **rezoning all Residential-Low and Residential-Medium areas of downtown to Mixed-Use Neighborhood**, which would allow higher densities. Some of the parcels which would be re-zoned are within the Downtown Study Area, on the north side of First Street and the south side of Acoma Avenue. The Downtown Concept Plan also recommends re-zoning General-Commercial parcels to Downtown-Commercial.

Residential uses should also be allowed by right in Downtown-Commercial zones, but the City may limit them to upper floors. For example, as shown in Figure 36, the City of Santa Monica’s zoning code includes L(1) as a category in addition to more standard categories such as P (Permitted) or CUP (Conditional Use Permit).

The L(1) category in Santa Monica’s zoning code references the following limitation:

- *“Limited to upper floors, and on the ground floor where the entire tenant space shall be located at least 25 feet from the front property line, except for residential units shall be limited to upper floors only.”*

This zoning has supported the City in creating a dense, walkable downtown, with apartments built above retail establishments.

Figure 36: Example of Santa Monica’s L(1) Zoning Category Permitting Residential Units on Upper Floors

TABLE 9.10.040 LAND USE REGULATIONS—DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS							
Use Classification	LT	NV	BC (Promenade and Third Street Promenade Area in BC (2nd and 4th Streets)	BC (2nd & 4th Streets) Excluding Third Street Promenade Area in BC (2nd and 4th Streets)	TA	OT	WT
Residential Uses							
Residential Housing Types	<i>See sub-classifications below.</i>						
<i>Single Unit Dwelling</i>	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)
<i>Accessory Dwelling Unit</i>	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
<i>Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit</i>	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
<i>Duplex</i>	P	L(3)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)
<i>Multiple-Unit Structure</i>	L(1)	L(3)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)
<i>Senior Citizen Multiple-Unit Residential</i>	L(1)	L(3)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)
<i>Single-Room Occupancy Housing</i>	L(1)	L(3)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)

Source: City of Santa Monica Municipal Code, 2023.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

Opening new opportunities for residential units to be constructed above light industrial development is a more innovative strategy, but it is supported by similar rationale to the downtown area; the housing could increase the pool of potential workers in the area and decrease average vehicle miles traveled, as many other jobs and locations (including schools, supermarkets, and many local businesses) would be only a short distance away. Light-Industrial zoning in Desert Hot Springs already allows a maximum structure height of five stories, so upper levels could potentially be developed as residential units. Allowing housing on upper levels creates potential light industrial land to be used even more efficiently and can increase property values without compromising the City’s goals for

industrial development. Allowing housing to be built on upper levels does not mean it would make sense for every development, but some developers might see on-site housing as an appropriate and compatible use to include in their projects, which could provide financial security for the project and a valuable benefit for the community.

Traditional zoning codes separate industrial uses from residential uses, but advances in technology have made many industries cleaner, safer, and quieter—and potentially compatible with housing. Both residents and cannabis businesses might mutually benefit from an increased sense of security, as businesses often employ on-site security personnel, which could make residents feel safer, and residents provide more “eyes on the street” who would be likely to notice and report any suspicious activities.

With thoughtful plans and policies in place to manage parking demand, residential components of new light industrial developments would not necessarily create parking difficulties in the area. Indeed, employment centers such as in Silicon Valley have begun exploring providing housing in place of the parking at large employment sites. Policies that discourage private parking and support sustainable transportation will help ensure new developments attract residents who want to work nearby or who can live comfortably with fewer vehicles. There may also be shared parking opportunities, as residential and industrial developments generate peak parking demand at different times of day. Another benefit is that mixed-use developments could significantly contribute to street safety improvements—such as creating sidewalks, developing dedicated bike/scooter lanes, and installing speed bumps—which would benefit residents and employees alike.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

Allowing residential development as an upper-floor use in Downtown-Commercial and light-industrial zones could increase the economic viability of projects, increase property values, and expand the City’s tax base. Increasing residential densities in the downtown and industrial cannabis study areas would also result in more efficient use of financial resources that promote sustainable transportation in these key areas.

Like the other policies recommended thus far, expanding the areas where mixed-use and infill development is allowed would primarily require drafting a new ordinance (establishing a new category of permitted uses such as L(1)), and occasionally performing more detailed site plan reviews, with minimal additional staff time required. New upper level residences will also result in increased demand for public services, but this would occur regardless of where new housing units are located.

5. Support Walking, Biking, and Shared Mobility

Explanation and Rationale

Desert Hot Springs has the opportunity to transform its transportation and land use system so that equitable, healthy, and sustainable modes of transportation are not only the most affordable, but also the most convenient and enjoyable. While the midday heat that occurs for several months a year is certainly a consideration, as are the windy conditions, the mild climate for most of the year provides opportunities for transportation choice. Ultimately, Desert Hot Springs will get what it builds for. A transportation strategy that takes “alternative” modes of travel—including walking, biking, e-bikes, electric scooters, neighborhood electric vehicles, transit services, carpooling, and car sharing—seriously today will eventually result in the following long-term benefits:

- Access and mobility for those too young, too elderly, too financially constrained, or otherwise unable to drive
- Financial freedom from the expenses of vehicle ownership (the Economic Policy Institute estimated average annual transportation spending for an adult in Desert Hot Springs at \$10,624—nearly half of the City’s median income for an individual, and over a quarter of the median household income)
- More efficient land use and reduced sprawl, resulting in more affordable housing, opportunities for community amenities, and the preservation of open space
- Health and wellness benefits of fresh air and exercise
- Greater sense of community
- Reduced automobile accidents and fatalities
- Improved air quality
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Economic vitality and support for local businesses
- Reduced traffic congestion
- Fiscal sustainability and savings on infrastructure spending

By planning for and investing in sustainable transportation and shared mobility, the City can eventually create a system in which individual incentives align with collective goals for health, fiscal responsibility, environmental sustainability, economic vitality, and community.

The City’s strategy should recognize its unique local context—including the warm climate, the grade of the terrain, the low residential density, and the need for connection with the surrounding region. Given these features, the strategy should especially consider opportunities to promote (1) electric bicycles and scooters, which can allow riders to travel uphill with minimal physical exertion and quickly cover longer trip distances within the City, and (2) car sharing opportunities, a convenient transportation option that can allow households who need a car or additional car only occasionally to reduce their vehicle ownership.

The shared mobility strategy should also recognize public transit availability in the area. Fixed route bus services can be expected to improve with time, as demand grows—as population density increases and vehicle ownership rates decrease. SunLine Transit Agency’s on-demand rideshare service, SunRide, can also play an important role in providing transportation access. In the cannabis district in particular, the City should also consider opportunities for commuter transportation, explore regional partnerships, and promote regional commute planning and incentive programs, including Sun Commute, IE Commuter, and SolVan Vanpool Program.

Implementation Actions

While implementation for the previous five strategies is more straightforward, often requiring little more than a zoning ordinance update, the strategy of supporting walking, biking, and shared mobility requires a more thorough outlining of recommended implementation steps. In addition to continuing to implement the recommendations set forth in the 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, the following actions are advised:

1. Develop an Active Transportation Safety and Connectivity Plan

The City of Desert Hot Springs has applied for grant funding to develop an Active Transportation Safety and Connectivity Plan, which will incorporate and update the 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Plan objectives

include (1) safer street design, (2) access to greater mobility choices, (3) a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable community, (4) improvements to mobility and connectivity, (5) reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and (6) improvements to air quality and public health and safety. Having a plan in place for multimodal infrastructure improvements is essential, and other actions listed for this strategy may help with the implementation of projects listed in the Active Transportation Safety and Connectivity Plan.

2. Adopt Mode Share Goals and Align Budget Expenditures

Adopting specific targets can help the City monitor its progress toward making sustainable mobility options safer, more convenient, and more appealing to travelers. These targets should also govern general fund transportation expenditures. For example, San Luis Obispo County has a 20 percent mode share goal for bicycling, so their policy requires that 20 percent of spending on transportation supports bicycle infrastructure. Mode share targets could be updated every ten years as the City makes progress toward its goals. Planning efforts are valuable only to the extent that they are implemented, and implementation requires aligning public spending with community goals.

The City should further support mode share goals by establishing corresponding “road share goals.” For example, if the City sets a ten-year goal for bicycle and scooter mode share at 20 percent, the City should plan to allocate a corresponding share of roadway space to dedicated bike lanes. Similarly, the City could plan to allocate 20 percent of the land currently used for automobile parking to bicycle and scooter parking, lockers, and charging.

3. Establish a Sustainable Mobility Impact Fee

The City has ample on- and off-street space dedicated to parking. Further, developers, their lenders, and other financial partners are already inclined to consider parking needs. In order to more quickly level the playing field for sustainable modes, Desert Hot Springs can establish a Sustainable Mobility Impact Fee.

For example, Pasadena has a Traffic Reduction and Transportation Fee. Rates are set per square foot for retail, office, and industrial developments, and by the number of units for residential developments. These funds are used for already-planned pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects throughout the City. Similarly, Santa Monica has a “Transportation Impact Fee”, and San Francisco has a “Transportation Sustainability Fee.” Establishing these fees requires a nexus study demonstrating the relationship between the expected transportation impacts of new developments and the cost of addressing those impacts through transportation improvements and trip reduction strategies.

4. Create a Parking and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

The value of creating a Parking and TDM plan was introduced in Section 4, as a way to discourage excessive provision of private and reserved parking. However, this strategy also has significant potential to improve conditions for walking, biking, and shared mobility. Many developers consider private parking necessary for project viability and will therefore need to include equal site level benefits for sustainable travel modes.

TDM measures may include secure bicycle parking, electric bicycle and scooter charging stations, showers and lockers, a fleet of bicycles, car-share parking and membership, shuttle bus services, vanpool programs, transit passes, transportation route displays, multimodal wayfinding signage, tailored transportation marketing services, parking cash-out, or localized infrastructure improvements—such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and lighting, which were identified in the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* as the top barriers to walking and biking in the City.

5. Promote Regional Commuter Programs

To reduce parking demand and promote sustainable travel choices, the City should explore regional partnerships promoting commuter services already offered by SunLine Transit Agency and the Riverside County Transportation Authority, including:

- **SunCommute:** SunLine Transit Agency provides materials, meetings, and workshops to employee transportation coordinators and provides staff for presentations to commuters. The agency also offers free trial bus passes and has an employer bus pass program with discounted monthly passes.
- **IE Commuter** is a program of the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority. The program helps employers of all sizes set up customized rideshare programs at no cost to the employer. The program also provides commuters with incentives, information, and services that encourage commuters to consider alternatives to driving alone.
 - **Rideshare Incentives and Guaranteed Ride Home Program:** IE Commuter offers monthly drawings, as well as a \$5 gift card per day rideshare incentive for employees who carpool or vanpool at least five days a month for three or more consecutive months. IE Commuter also offers a Guaranteed Ride Home program, which provides Lyft/Uber or other travel reimbursement for commuters who use rideshare to get to work but may have to leave early due to an emergency or stay late to work unexpected overtime.
- **SolVan Vanpool Program:** Other services include carpool or vanpool matching and personalized bus or train routing assistance. IE Commuter partners with SunLine Transit to offer the SolVan program, a vanpool incentive program for groups of 5 to 15 people, which provides a \$400-500 per month subsidy to offset the cost of the van lease. Vanpool is marketed as a way to save money by splitting the cost of gas, tolls, and parking, enjoy more free time and legroom, reduce wear and mileage on personal vehicles, travel in a more environmentally friendly way, and save time in traffic by accessing HOV lanes.

The City should also explore whether there may be an opportunity to partner with regional agencies and local employers to collaboratively develop a more tailored employee transportation program, such as a commuter shuttle, serving the cannabis district. Especially when tens or even hundreds of employees work similar shifts, as is the case in the cannabis district, shared mobility can deliver many benefits—reducing individual transportation spending, reducing traffic congestion and emissions, reducing parking demand and allowing land to be used more efficiently, and expanding access to employment opportunities.

6. Establish Development Standards and a Plan for Bicycle and Scooter Parking.

Development standards: Requiring secure bicycle parking is one step cities can take to promote sustainable transportation. The California Green Building Standards Code already establishes bicycle parking requirements, but Desert Hot Springs can go further by updating the development code so that new developments must provide secure parking and charging that can accommodate short- and long-term storage of electric bicycles, electric scooters, and larger e-cargo bikes. Any indoor storage and charging rooms should require safety measures such as cinder blocks, upgraded electrical outlets, and sprinkler heads to protect buildings and inhabitants from fire damage and injuries, which can occasionally result from the charging of faulty e-bike and e-scooter batteries.

Planning for public infrastructure: The City should also conduct an inventory of publicly available bicycle and scooter parking, identify locations in need of public bicycle and scooter parking and charging infrastructure, and identify funding sources and a project timeline for implementing the necessary infrastructure.

7. Explore Potential Connector Routes between Downtown and Key Areas

As downtown Desert Hot Springs develops and becomes a more popular destination, the City should explore options that would encourage visitors from key areas to visit using sustainable transportation. Routes could draw new visitors downtown and make non-driving options more accessible for those already planning to visit.

Spa District: Plans for connecting the spa district with downtown could involve creating an aesthetically appealing pedestrian, bicycle, scooter, or even neighborhood electric vehicle route along Miracle Hill Road that connects downtown with the spa district. The City could collaborate with hotels, who could offer their guests access to a fleet of personal electric vehicles, and the City could provide signage and wayfinding along the route and secure parking on Pierson Boulevard and at other tourism destinations, such as Cabot's Pueblo Museum, or local hiking trails. During special events, the City may also wish to explore a potential partnership and offer shuttle service from spa district and any nearby high-density residential neighborhoods to the downtown.

Cannabis Area: Cannabis area employees could also be encouraged to explore downtown Desert Hot Springs if there were a dedicated travel route for bicycles and electric vehicles. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan includes proposed bike lanes for Two Bunch Palms Trail and Cactus Drive; this could connect the cannabis area with downtown, and the City could use signage and wayfinding to specifically promote downtown access. Signage and wayfinding should also indicate transit stop locations and routes. As in the Spa District, the City should explore partnerships with employers to provide their employees access to a fleet of electric bicycles, scooters, or neighborhood electric vehicles, potentially as a TDM option or condition of development. Once a safe and attractive bike and scooter route is created, not only will multimodal commuting be more accessible, but employees may also take advantage of the opportunity to explore downtown during lunch breaks or after work.

8. Explore Opportunity to Create a Downtown Specific Plan that Includes Planning for a Mobility Hub

Parking planning touches a broad spectrum of plans and issues related to land use, transportation, and economic development. The broader transportation and land use recommendations contained in this report to improve parking in the downtown therefore, of necessity, go beyond parking. Combined with previous work done by and for the City, it is likely that the next phase of implementation for meaningful implementation of the parking recommendations and other City priorities would be the creation of a comprehensive Downtown Specific Plan.

As part of this plan, the role, location, and programming of a multimodal center, or "mobility hub" in the downtown district should be determined. The mobility hub should be served by SunLine Transit and connected to active transportation infrastructure. Bikes, e-bikes, scooters, and/or shuttles may be made available for first- and last-mile travel to key employment centers, including the Industrial Cannabis district. Micromobility transportation vehicles that utilize improving battery technologies are becoming an increasingly viable, equitable, and sustainable transportation solution, particularly for short trips and first- and last-mile links to transit. Micromobility options could be a key feature of a mobility hub. Some smaller cities in the region are already forming pilot agreements with scooter companies to provide service to the public. For example, we were told that in 29 Palms, Bird scooters available through a pilot program were used not only by tourists, but also in many cases by residents, for daily work trips and errands.

Establishing a central physical presence for active transportation and shared mobility can also help increase awareness of these mode options and create more culture and community around sustainable transportation. If

the City is able to partner with a local nonprofit organization, a mobility hub could also include community programming, such as a bike kitchen, classes, group rides, or a lending library.

Supportive General Plan Policies

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.
- **LU-1.7: Infrastructure.** Ensure that infrastructure is integrated into the community concurrently with new development projects.
- **LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments.** Accommodate outdoor cafes and neighborhood-serving uses as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and commercial center vitality.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-1.3: Multi-Modal.** Aim to develop a multimodal and/or multipurpose approach when implementing infrastructure outlined in the Mobility Plan.
- **Policy MI-2.6: Rights-of-Ways.** Use available public rights-of-ways to provide wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trail facilities, and transit amenities.
- **Policy MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization.** Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- **Policy MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies.** Repurpose underused roadway space for safety, mobility, and public space improvements using low-cost, temporary solutions.
- **Policy MI-3.4: Test Street Improvement.** Install temporary, low-cost materials to test street improvement ideas prior to incorporating permanent designs for successful projects.
- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.
- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.

- **Policy MI-10.3: Impact Fees.** Ensure that impact fees provide adequate funding for necessary transportation improvements that will benefit all travel modes, while also incentivizing development that is less dependent on expensive, new transportation.
- **Policy MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way.** Seek opportunities to integrate mobility and infrastructure planning, particularly to efficiently use rights-of-way.

Economic Development Element Policies

- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.
- **Policy ED-2.3: Streamline Permit Process.** Maintain a development permitting process that provides clarity, consistency, and assistance opportunities for new businesses and existing businesses looking to expand.

Open Space and Natural Resources Element Policy

- **Policy OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals.** Ensure that land use and transportation plans support regional air quality goals, with new development projects reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.

Health and Wellness Element Policy

- **Policy HW-1.10: Amenities that Promote Healthy Living.** Encourage developments to provide access, facilities, and amenities that connect to trails, encourage walking, and/or provide for other facilities that promote healthy living.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

Adopting mode share goals, establishing sustainable mobility impact fees, linking parking and TDM standards, adding bicycle and scooter parking, and exploring potential connector routes are all important steps to bring about a future where sustainable mobility options are convenient ways for people to access downtown. These actions align with the community's desire for safe walking and biking infrastructure, support community health and economic vitality, and complement the parking strategies set forth in the previous sections.

In addition to the implementation action items detailed above, Desert Hot Springs should implement the following programs to support active transportation, as recommended in the *Downtown Concept Plan*:

- M-3.3.1 Build a bicycle kitchen.
- M-4.1.1 Incorporate speed management measures.
- M-4.3.1 Implement a pedestrian signal policy that prioritizes pedestrian safety.
- M-4.5.1 Maintain the quality and cleanliness of streets.
- M-5.1.2 Ensure maintenance of painted street markings.
- M-5.4.1 Create unique pedestrian crossings with paintings that showcase local community artists.
- CC-4.1.1 Install water fountains and hydration stations.
- C-4.1.3 Develop a Downtown Shade Plan to increase tree canopy and pedestrian shade amenities.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

Supporting walking, biking, and shared mobility will also benefit the industrial cannabis study area. Safe multimodal infrastructure and regional commuter incentive programs can encourage employees to try sustainable transportation options. When more employees share rides or commute by bikes, e-bikes, and electric scooters, fewer parking spaces will be necessary, and land can be used more efficiently.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

Of the five parking management strategies proposed, supporting walking, biking, and shared mobility is the only one that will require substantial ongoing investment. Fortunately, expanding and maintaining the City's active transportation infrastructure—including secure parking and safe travel lanes for bikes and scooters—is inexpensive relative to expanding and maintaining automobile infrastructure. Spending decisions should be consistent with the community's goals, and the City can also pursue additional funding through regional, state, and federal active transportation grants.

A significant investment of City staff time will be necessary to successfully support walking, biking, and shared mobility in Desert Hot Springs. As explained in the implementation section above, this involves developing new goals, plans, partnerships, and policies and identifying, obtaining, and allocating sources of revenue. Planning and policy efforts will require more time in the short-term, while implementation will be ongoing as the City continually seeks to become a place where residents and visitors have a variety of attractive transportation options available and can rely less on private vehicles.

Potential Longer-Term Strategies

This section introduces successful parking strategies that may become relevant for Desert Hot Springs many years into the future, if the City prioritizes livability, health, economic vitality, and sustainability through efficient land use patterns and ensures that new growth and development aligns with the community goals established in the General Plan. Over the next few decades, implementing the above strategies may gradually result in a landscape where surface parking is no longer such a dominant land use, and residents and visitors have a variety of attractive transportation options to choose from for traveling around the City.

1. Manage Public Parking Based on Demand

Explanation and Rationale

While existing conditions in the City do not demonstrate a need for demand-based parking management, the Southern California Association of Governments and the City of Desert Hot Springs share many goals that are supported by having a plan and vision in place for what to do if demand patterns and utilization rates change in the future.

In December 2022, parking utilization downtown ranged from 12 percent to 18 percent; there is an abundance of parking. The ideal occupancy rate is 85 percent, which means parking spaces are well-used but still available and convenient for visitors. This usually translates to one or two empty spaces per block. Many successful business

districts and densely developed areas eventually find that parking occupancies naturally come to exceed this 85 percent threshold in prime locations, and strategies must be developed to maintain availability. Keeping a few spaces available on each block keeps visitors from having to circle to find a space—saving time, preventing superfluous emissions, allowing people to arrive on-time for appointments and meetings, and ensuring potential visitors do not decide to shop or dine elsewhere due to a lack of convenient parking.

Desert Hot Springs is advised to monitor street parking occupancy, and, if ever warranted by utilization rates that regularly exceed 85 percent, develop and implement a demand-based parking management strategy.

- **Time limits:** One approach to keeping a few spaces available involves creating parking time limits for prime street parking spaces. This can encourage employees and other longer-term parkers find a space off-street or several blocks away, ensuring the most convenient spaces are available for short-term visitors. However, this approach is somewhat limited, as it requires enforcement to be successful. Time limits are cumbersome to enforce, and the City may not wish to issue citations, which can leave visitors with a negative impression of their visit.
- **Demand-based pricing:** An alternative involves establishing demand-based prices—not set with the purpose of generating revenue, but simply with the purpose of ensuring continued availability. Prices set with this purpose should be kept at the lowest rate that successfully keeps a few spaces available, which supports local businesses downtown. Targeting 85 percent occupancy ensures many people are still visiting the area, and those who want to save on the cost of parking may choose to carpool or park in areas of less demand and walk to their destination.
- **Demand-based parking permits:** Charging per transaction makes sense where many different people park in an area and most visits occur irregularly. If public parking becomes scarce on streets in residential or industrial areas, it can be more convenient to allow those who park regularly to purchase a permit guaranteeing their access to a street parking space in the area. As with hourly rates in commercial areas, the cost of a permit can be set at the lowest price necessary to successfully manage demand. Many permit areas offer slightly fewer permits than the number of spaces available to keep a few spaces available so that infrequent visitors or guests have an option to purchase a daily parking pass.

It is not anticipated that parking demand would exceed the 85 percent threshold anytime in the near future, and would likely only result from large scale development, but it is important that the City recognize management options are available; otherwise, concerns about availability could derail the sustainability, visual character, affordability, and efficiency of future growth and development. Providing parking involves land costs, construction costs, operation and maintenance costs, and environmental costs.⁵ Free parking subsidizes the true cost of driving and makes solo driving more attractive. The City may wish to continue to subsidize driving through free parking where it has already been developed, to promote access and activity in places where parking occupancy rates are not high enough to justify charging; however, future public investments and subsidies should focus on creating equal access for more sustainable modes of travel.

⁵ Litman, 2023. Comprehensive Parking Supply, Cost and Pricing Analysis. <https://www.vtpi.org/pscp.pdf>

Supportive General Plan Policies

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **Policy LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.
- **Policy LU-1.6: Infill Revitalization.** Encourage revitalization of underutilized and vacant infill properties within the City closest to available infrastructure and community services.
- **Policy LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor.** Allow higher-density and mixed uses along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage shopping, services, and entertainment amenities in closer proximity to established infrastructure and transit services.
- **Policy LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification.** Encourage the intensification of commercial uses on underutilized and vacant commercial properties within Downtown and along the Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive corridors.
- **Policy LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources.** Maximize revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources.
- **Policy LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments.** Accommodate outdoor cafes and neighborhood-serving uses as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and commercial center vitality.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-1.3: Multi-Modal.** Aim to develop a multimodal and/or multipurpose approach when implementing infrastructure outlined in the Mobility Plan.
- **Policy MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization.** Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.
- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.
- **Policy MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way.** Seek opportunities to integrate mobility and infrastructure planning, particularly to efficiently use rights-of-way.

Economic Development Element Policies

- **Policy ED-1.9: Cannabis Cultivation.** Develop a comprehensive strategy to position the City as the premier center for cannabis cultivation and production businesses and enterprises that support/complement the developing cannabis industry in the Coachella Valley.
- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.

Open Space and Natural Resources Element Policy

- **Policy OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals.** Ensure that land use and transportation plans support regional air quality goals, with new development projects reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.

Health and Wellness Element Policy

- **Policy HW-1.10: Amenities that Promote Healthy Living.** Encourage developments to provide access, facilities, and amenities that connect to trails, encourage walking, and/or provide for other facilities that promote healthy living.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

Having a plan to manage public parking should there ever be high demand in the future allows Desert Hot Springs to take meaningful actions today that will welcome sustainable growth and development patterns that are not dominated by parking. This plan helps reveal the true value of parking and supports the efficient use of space, including through incentivizing shared parking. Demand-based parking management strategies align with goals for economic development, infill development, sustainable development, rent affordability, and development density, while also helping local businesses. Other cities have seen an increase in economic activity and sales tax revenue after implementing demand-based pricing. In the long-term, management also has the potential to generate revenue, which can be used to bring local business owners and residents together to develop and fund downtown beautification projects and transportation initiatives that further attract visitors to the area. This idea is further discussed in the Parking Benefit District section.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

Having a plan for demand-based parking management allows the City to make efficient use of the large supply of potential and existing street parking in the industrial cannabis study area. Both offering initial free public parking to incentivize development and offering paid parking permits if parking ever becomes scarce support the goal of increasing revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources. When vehicles are allowed to park on the street, developers have more flexible options, which may result in a greater share of off-street land being used for economically productive uses. If so many people take advantage of street parking that it becomes difficult to find a space and causes traffic issues, the City can offer permits. Permit revenue can support program administration and enforcement or alternative transportation programs supporting cannabis area employees.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

Developing a demand-based management program—whether based on time limits, pricing, or permits—requires staff time to create a plan, conduct outreach, and administer. The initial investment to implement paid parking

depends on the technology chosen. Ongoing investment depends on the level of enforcement necessary to obtain compliance. Operational costs for paid parking are typically covered by revenues, and a program may even generate revenue, which can fund streetscape beautification projects, cleaning, security, sustainable transportation programs, or whatever projects are prioritized by the local community. Reinvesting revenue in the district where it was generated can create a virtuous cycle, making the area more attractive and drawing in more visitors. When Old Pasadena implemented paid parking, economic activity improved and sales tax revenue in the area increased relative to other commercial centers in the City.

If this strategy ever becomes relevant for Desert Hot Springs, staff time will be required to conduct an initial parking occupancy study and develop a plan. Occupancy rates should be monitored periodically, and adjustments to time limits or pricing should be made as necessary to achieve the goals of the program. Enforcement should occur only as often as necessary to ensure parking availability is maintained.

2. Invest in New Parking Technologies

Explanation and Rationale

The Southern California Association of Governments supports regional cities in pursuing innovative approaches to planning and policy issues. If the City's parking management becomes more complex in the future, it is well-worth exploring the technology solutions available to create a user-friendly experience and save staff time on administration and enforcement. For example, smart sensors can monitor parking utilization, which can highlight to the public where spaces are available and can provide data that helps staff update rates based on demand. In areas with paid parking, pay-by-plate technologies can facilitate automated license plate reader (ALPR) enforcement and allow staff time to be used more efficiently. The City can also encourage shared parking by partnering with and promoting one of the many mobile apps that allows private property owners to rent out their parking spaces when not in use.

Supportive General Plan Policies

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **Policy LU-1.8: Lot Consolidation.** Encourage lot consolidation and utilize land assembly strategies and incentives to promote compatible infill developments.
- **Policy LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU-2.7: Higher Residential Density Corridor.** Allow higher-density and mixed uses along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage shopping, services, and entertainment amenities in closer proximity to established infrastructure and transit services.
- **Policy LU-3.6: Commercial Intensification.** Encourage the intensification of commercial uses on underutilized and vacant commercial properties within Downtown and along the Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive corridors.
- **Policy LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources.** Maximize revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources.

- **Policy LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions.** Allow mixed-use developments to utilize shared parking plans, park once and walk districts, and other innovative and flexible parking strategies.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development.** Prioritize business attraction and retention of employment and revenue-generating uses on industrial land.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-11.2: Cluster Development.** Encourage proposed projects within designated conservation areas to cluster development to provide for the greatest amount of conservation while respecting surrounding established and planned uses.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization.** Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.
- **Policy MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way.** Seek opportunities to integrate mobility and infrastructure planning, particularly to efficiently use rights-of-way.

Economic Development Element Policy

- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

Parking technologies can benefit the downtown in the following ways:

- Facilitating demand-based management.
- Helping drivers see available parking locations and decide where to park.
- Removing friction from the payment process.
- Providing occupancy data to inform rate adjustments.
- Increasing the ease and efficiency of enforcement.
- Creating potential for downtown business parking validation programs.
- Promoting sustainable land use and helping local owners benefit economically through sharing parking.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

Parking technologies can benefit the industrial cannabis study area in the following ways:

- Facilitating demand-based management through plate-based permits.
- Allowing occasional visitors to park on an hourly or daily basis.
- Providing occupancy data to inform management decisions.
- Increasing the ease and efficiency of enforcement, ensuring spaces are available and parking does not create traffic issues.
- Promoting sustainable land use and helping local owners benefit economically through sharing parking.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

The costs and benefits of each technology should be considered at the time additional parking management becomes necessary, based on community needs and input. Technologies are continually developing, and while it is worthwhile to know what options may be available, it may be many years before it makes sense for Desert Hot Springs consider investing in new parking management solutions.

Staff time will be required to explore options and conduct outreach with local business owners, community members, and City staff members to determine which technologies best meet their needs.

3. Create a Parking Benefit District

Explanation and Rationale

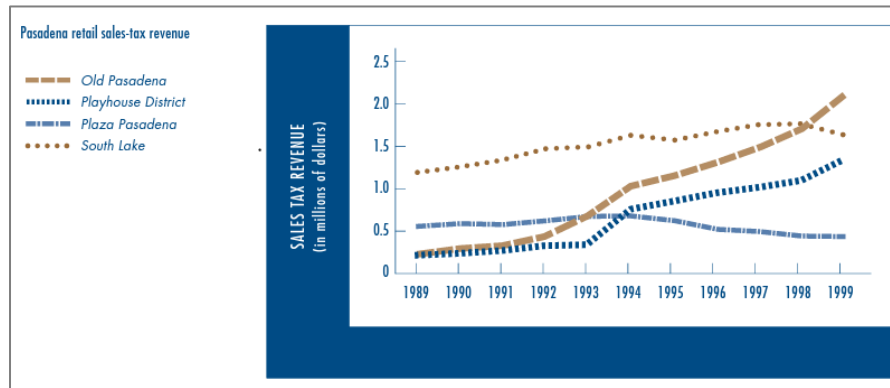
A parking benefit district is a public-private partnership which facilitates the comprehensive management of parking resources (on- and off-street and, ideally publicly and privately owned), giving the business community and resident stakeholders an active role in identifying parking issues, needs, and opportunities, making decisions, and allocating parking revenue for local programs or projects. This helps ensure that public spaces are managed in a way that most benefits the community, and it also helps generate buy-in and support for the parking management program, as stakeholders see how it will benefit them. When the parking program results in revenue, stakeholders may choose how the revenue is used—for initiatives like downtown street beautification projects, active transportation infrastructure, shuttles, or employee cash outs or e-bike rebates.

Parking Benefit District Example: Old Pasadena

Pasadena is a mid-sized city in Los Angeles County with a thriving business district, Old Pasadena, that now attracts many visitors for shopping and dining. Old Pasadena was one of the earliest adopters of what has come to be widely accepted as a best practice in parking management, the “parking benefit district” model. Pasadena also uses pricing to ensure convenient street parking is available for short-term visitors, limits parking supply in transit-oriented development areas, and uses transportation impact fees to fund sustainable mobility projects.

Initially, Old Pasadena had no parking management other than two-hour time limits. City staff suggested installing meters, but some business owners were concerned that charging for parking would discourage potential customers from visiting. Then, the City proposed using all parking revenue to fund public improvements within the parking meter zone and allowing advisory board members to control the use of revenue. Merchants and property owners accepted this idea. The parking meters resulted in greater availability of convenient curb parking for customers, and customers willing to pay for parking seemed to be more willing to spend more money in Old Pasadena. Retail sales and tax revenue in Old Pasadena increased significantly following the installation of parking meters in 1993, including when compared to other commercial districts in Pasadena, as shown in Figure 37.

Figure 37: Retail sales-tax revenue in Old Pasadena before and after installing parking meters in 1993



Source: Access Magazine, *Turning Small Change Into Big Changes*, Kolozsvari and Shoup, 2003.

Meter revenues were used to fund street furniture, trees, tree grates, lighting fixtures, cleaning services, marketing, and security services and patrols for the area. These public improvements attracted more visitors, which resulted in higher meter revenues and created a “virtuous cycle” of continual improvements credited with revitalizing the downtown. A marketing campaign assured visitors that their parking fees would be used to benefit Old Pasadena.

Old Pasadena Parking Meter



Source: *Parking Matters in Old Pasadena*, Kolozsvari and Shoup, 2018.

Thirty years after initial implementation, the Parking Benefit District is still delivering benefits to the area. In October 2022, Pasadena’s Director of Transportation provided the Old Pasadena Parking Meter Zone Advisory Commission with a report on the parking meter fund’s revenues, expenses, and projections through the end of the year. The fund was estimated to end with a balance of approximately \$1.6 million, with \$900,000 designated to cover operations and meter replacement expenses, and approximately \$682,000 available for appropriations. The Advisory Commission is composed of seven members—three property owners in the area, three business owners who rent property, and one “at large” member who may be either. The commissioners guide the expenditure of meter revenue and recommend meter rate adjustments.

Supportive General Plan Policies

Land Use and Community Design Element Policies

- **Policy LU-1.5: Reduce Vehicular Trips and Miles Traveled.** Coordinate land use patterns with the Mobility and Infrastructure Element to improve and protect air quality, reduce vehicular trips, and promote active transportation modes and transit use.
- **Policy LU-1.9: Community Health through Land Use Planning.** Maintain and promote the pattern and linkage of land uses citywide to promote mobility choices and healthy lifestyles.

- **Policy LU-3.10: City-owned Land and Resources.** Maximize revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources.
- **Policy LU-4.2: Pedestrian-friendly Environments.** Accommodate outdoor cafes and neighborhood-serving uses as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and commercial center vitality.
- **Policy LU-7.6: Innovative Parking Solutions.** Allow mixed-use developments to utilize shared parking plans, park once and walk districts, and other innovative and flexible parking strategies.
- **Policy LU-8.5: Prioritize Industrial Development.** Prioritize business attraction and retention of employment and revenue-generating uses on industrial land.
- **Policy LU-11.1: Efficient Land Use Patterns.** Encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City's desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- **Policy LU-12.10: Visual Character.** Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of neighborhoods and districts.

Mobility and Infrastructure Element Policies

- **Policy MI-1.3: Multi-Modal.** Aim to develop a multimodal and/or multipurpose approach when implementing infrastructure outlined in the Mobility Plan.
- **Policy MI-2.6: Rights-of-Ways.** Use available public rights-of-ways to provide wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trail facilities, and transit amenities.
- **Policy MI-3.1: Safety Prioritization.** Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- **Policy MI-3.3: Adaptive Street Strategies.** Repurpose underused roadway space for safety, mobility, and public space improvements using low-cost, temporary solutions.
- **Policy MI-3.4: Test Street Improvement.** Install temporary, low-cost materials to test street improvement ideas prior to incorporating permanent designs for successful projects.
- **Policy MI-5.1: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.** Implement development and transportation improvements that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), reducing impacts on the City's transportation network, and maintaining the desired service levels for all modes of transportation.
- **Policy MI-5.2: Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Strategies.** Implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled. Consider using vehicle daily trips as the benchmark demand for determining potential levels of parking and vehicular congestion.
- **Policy MI-9.4: Special Assessments.** Support special assessment districts for street and traffic improvements.
- **Policy MI-10.2: Expand Funding.** Prioritize funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users, where fiscally prudent.
- **Policy MI-11.7: Rights-of-Way.** Seek opportunities to integrate mobility and infrastructure planning, particularly to efficiently use rights-of-way.

Economic Development Element Policy

- **Policy ED-2.2: Economic Development.** Promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.

Open Space and Natural Resources Element Policy

- **Policy OS-2.4: Air Quality Goals.** Ensure that land use and transportation plans support regional air quality goals, with new development projects reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.

Health and Wellness Element Policy

- **Policy HW-1.10: Amenities that Promote Healthy Living.** Encourage developments to provide access, facilities, and amenities that connect to trails, encourage walking, and/or provide for other facilities that promote healthy living.

Impact on the Downtown Study Area

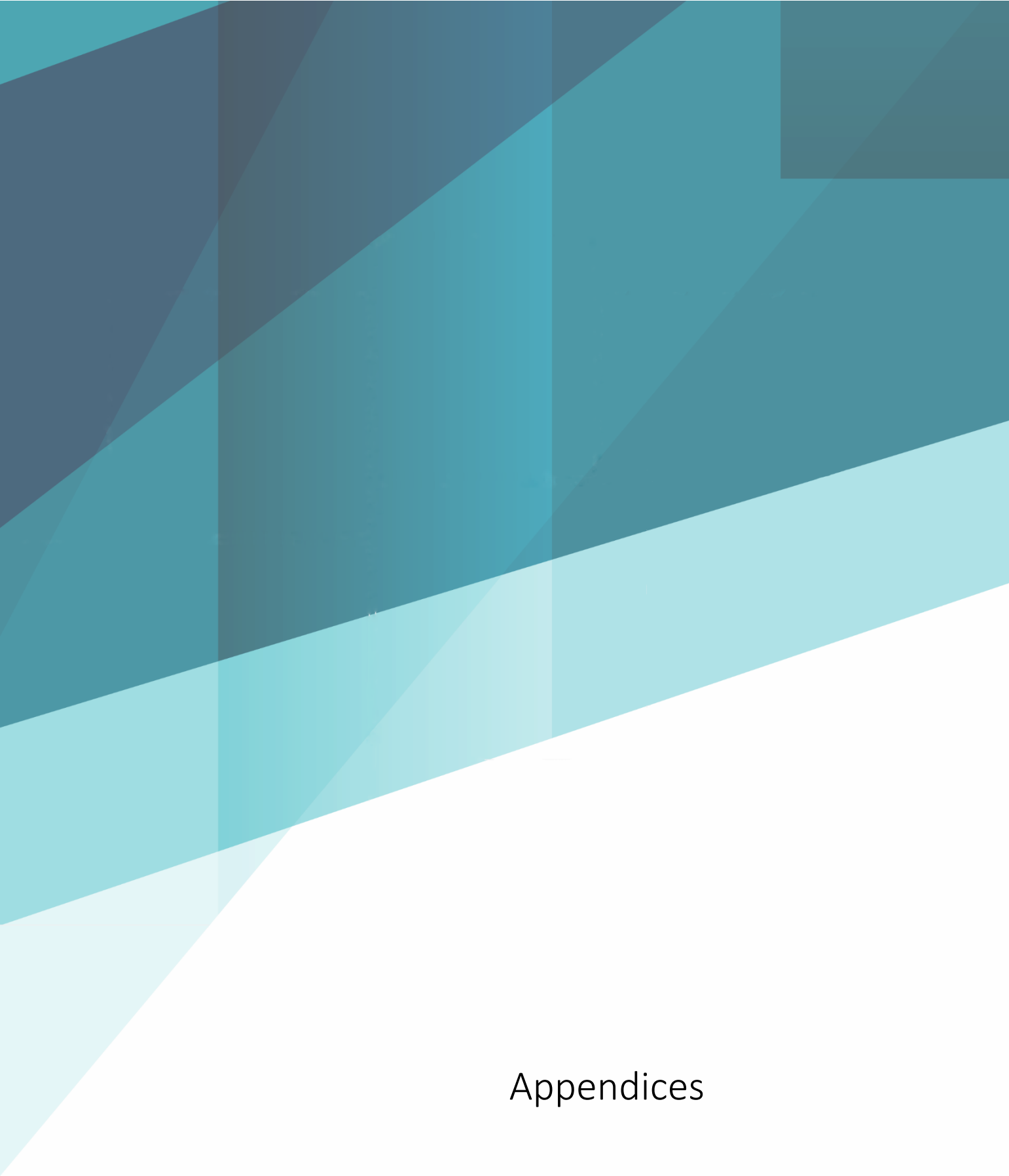
If parking demand downtown ever justifies and leads to considering paid parking as a parking management tool, a parking benefit district should be implemented at the same time. This can allow downtown business and property owners to participate in a shared vision for the future of downtown Desert Hot Springs by informing decision making and allocating any parking revenues generated in the area for local improvements. Other parking benefit districts have chosen to use their paid parking programs to fund “clean and safe” programs, downtown ambassadors, free downtown Wi-Fi, landscaping and street beautification, public parking structures, cleaning and security services, and employee transportation wallet programs. Parking benefit districts help generate political buy-in for paid parking programs and result in more informed management of public and shared parking. Business owners often have important insights about the transportation needs of their employees and visitors and can offer valuable suggestions for localized parking management solutions.

Impact on the Industrial Cannabis Study Area

If parking demand in the industrial cannabis study area increases enough to justify permitted parking, a parking benefit district could be implemented at the same time to help manage the parking supply efficiently and allocate revenue. In collaboration with business owners and employees, the City can determine the optimal monthly permit cost that would sufficiently reduce street parking demand while still ensuring spaces are well-utilized. Stakeholders would include anyone who lives or works in the area, including those who drive alone, carpool, or use alternative transportation. Based on their input, revenue could be used to fund employee transportation programs (such as carpool incentives, park and ride shuttles, or e-bike or scooter rebates), active transportation infrastructure, or street safety improvements.

Financial Implications and Staffing Requirements

If Desert Hot Springs experiences high parking demand in the future, parking benefit districts can help the City obtain the stakeholder buy-in necessary to implement paid parking programs. These programs can manage parking demand efficiently while also generating revenue to fund local projects and programs. Well-managed public parking and alternative transportation initiatives can also increase property values and make an area more desirable to developers or potential business owners.



Appendices

Appendix A: Exploratory Calculations and Discussion of Future Conditions

Introduction

The future of parking and access needs in Desert Hot Springs depends on the ability of existing parking infrastructure to be used efficiently to absorb demand, and also on the community's desire and ability to leverage interventions, transportation demand management initiatives, and infrastructure investments to support travel by modes other than driving alone.

This chapter's intent is to assess how future development and population growth trends in the City of Desert Hot Springs will likely impact street parking demand in (1) the downtown area and (2) the industrial cannabis district, and to provide insights into the potential benefits of public parking management in the long-term.

Commercial and industrial development, new housing, population shifts, transportation service and infrastructure decisions, and many other factors will impact parking demands both in quantity and in how they are distributed throughout the city. Parking in the study areas may be affected by population growth within the City boundaries and by economic growth and development that brings additional employees or visitors from other regions to the area. To project future public parking supply and demand for the City, the analysis in this chapter considers a planning horizon that extends to 2045, the same horizon used in population growth projections developed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The analysis includes the following scenarios:

- Downtown study area; base growth
- Downtown study area; aggressive growth
- Industrial cannabis study area; base growth
- Industrial cannabis study area; aggressive growth

The base growth scenario for the downtown study area considers population growth projections, zoning and development potential, and the City's strategic goals for future commercial build out. The base scenario is then adjusted to explore the potential impact of more aggressive growth and economic development. For the industrial cannabis study area, both scenarios combine observations of parking demand made at existing facilities with industrial build out possibilities based on projections provided by the City.

The chapter concludes by interpreting the findings of the future conditions analyses and previewing the potential impact of developing more proactive policies and practices. The projections provide insight into what could happen if future travel and development patterns reflect the status quo, but it is also possible for the City to help shape travel behavior and parking provision to better support efficient land use and multimodal transportation.

Future Downtown Parking Demand

An understanding of the factors of existing downtown parking supply and demand is necessary to be able to model how a variety of different assumptions for future conditions—inputs related to economic development, population growth, and parking management practices—might affect the demand for parking in the downtown study area. This section uses data, develops assumptions, and relies on the *Shared Parking* model to construct base growth and aggressive growth scenario projections of parking demand.

The major factors that contribute to downtown parking demand are types of land uses, square footage or similar metrics for those land uses, and how people access downtown (mode split). The number of residential units in the area, visitors, frequency of trips and peak demand, resident vehicle ownership also play a role. These factors are explored in more depth in the subsections below.

To gather relevant information for the downtown study area, Walker consulted Replica data, a proprietary data set that provides data related to mobility, land use, people, and economic activity from location-based mobile apps, connected vehicles, and demographic data from public and private sources. Replica tracks origin and destination behaviors by land use and travel mode.

Residential Land Use - Existing

A sizeable amount of the downtown study area contains residential buildings. Residential land uses can sometimes contribute to street parking demand, but single family homes and multi-family developments often include ample off-street parking. In Desert Hot Springs, approximately 197,000 square feet, or 36 percent of the land in the downtown study area is currently used for single-family residences, according to Replica data. Approximately 95,000 square feet, or 18 percent, is used for multi-family residences. There are approximately 84 single-family homes and 161 multi-family dwelling units in the study area.

Within the study area, approximately 5 percent of households have no vehicles available, 33 percent have one vehicle, 30 percent have two vehicles, and 32 percent have three or more vehicles. Table 1 below uses this information and an assumption of an average of 3.5 vehicles per 3+ vehicle household to calculate the approximate number of resident-owned vehicles in the study area, for a total of 502 vehicles.

Table 1: Resident-owned vehicles in the Downtown Study Area

	Number of Dwelling Units	0 Vehicle Households	1 Vehicle Households	2 Vehicle Households	3+ Vehicle Households	Total Vehicles
Single-Family	84	4	28	25	27	172
Multi-Family	161	8	53	48	52	330

Source: *Data – Replica, 2023. Table and calculations - Walker Consultants, 2023.*

The minimum parking requirements for multi-family dwelling units are 1.5 covered spaces for studio and 1-bedroom apartments, 2 covered spaces for 2-bedroom apartments, and 2.5 covered spaces for apartments with three or more bedrooms. Buildings are also required to provide one uncovered guest space for every five units. Assuming an average of 2 spaces per multi-family unit would result in 322 covered spaces and 32 uncovered guest spaces, or a total of 354 spaces associated with multi-family housing in the downtown area. Single-family homes

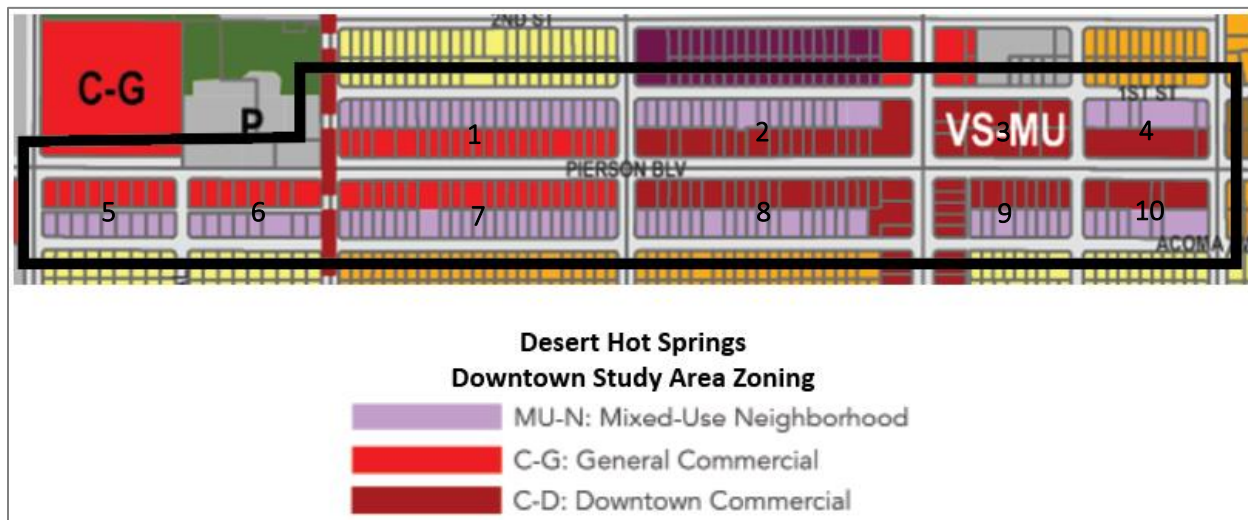
are required to have 2 spaces in an enclosed garage, which usually results in at least two additional spaces on the driveway. Assuming four spaces per home would result in approximately 336 off-street spaces associated with single-family homes. Based on these assumptions, the total estimated supply of residential off-street parking is approximately 690 spaces, which significantly exceeds the estimate of resident-owned vehicles and suggests residential demand is not currently a significant factor contributing to demand for street parking downtown.

Residential Land Use - Future

According to SCAG’s *Connect SoCal Demographics and Growth Forecast*, the population of Desert Hot Springs is projected to increase from 29,000 in 2016 to 61,000 in 2045, or by approximately 1,100 residents per year. The number of households is projected to increase from 9,300 to 24,700, or by approximately 530 per year.

The 2021-2029 Housing Element included a Regional Housing Needs Allocation of 3,693 new housing units by 2029. The site analysis did not indicate or plan for any significant housing developments in the downtown study area, although the zoning code does permit residential development in the Mixed-Use Neighborhood zones on the south side of 1st Street and the north side of Acoma Avenue (see the purple areas in Figure 1). Because many of these parcels currently contain single family homes, some parcels may be redeveloped now that zoning allows for increased density—up to 15 dwelling units per acre and building heights of up to three stories.

Figure 1: Downtown Study Area Zoning Map



Source: *City of Desert Hot Springs, 2023.*

There are not currently plans or identified sites for new housing within the downtown study area, but it is possible some residential development will occur due to the increase in allowable density. However, most new housing developments tend to provide ample off-street parking regardless of parking requirements. Given this fact, and the estimated surplus of residential parking that currently exists, this analysis assumes that any new residential buildings that may be constructed downtown are unlikely to significantly affect parking demand in the study area.

Commercial Land Use - Existing

The land along Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive is zoned either General Commercial or Downtown Commercial (see the red areas of Figure 1). Currently, there are a variety of establishments in this area, including restaurants, retail, professional services, funeral parlors, offices, religious institutions, and City Hall. There are also several vacant parcels. Parking lots comprise a sizeable share of land in the downtown. There are approximately 800 on-street spaces and 999 spaces in parking lots, not including driveway and garage spaces associated with single family homes or parking lots with fewer than five spaces.

Table 2 below displays Replica summary data with estimates of existing building uses and square footage within the downtown study area:

Table 2: Current Building Square Footage by Use in the Downtown Study Area

Building Use	Area (square feet)	% of Total
Single-Family Residential	197,000	36%
Retail	103,000	19%
Multi-Family Residential	95,000	18%
Office	84,000	15%
Non-Retail Attraction	42,700	8%
Other Categories	20,900	4%
Total	542,600	100%

Source: *Data – Replica, 2023. Table and calculations - Walker Consultants, 2023.*

There are currently 250,600 square feet, or slightly less than half of the downtown building area, occupied by non-residential buildings. However, some of these buildings may be vacant. With the current build-out, the “typical day” peak parking demand was observed at 9:00 am on a Thursday. There were 325 parked vehicles observed in the study area at this time, a parking utilization rate of 18 percent.

Commercial Land Use – Future

The map in Figure 1 shows that slightly more than half of the land in the downtown study area is zoned commercial. The Mixed-Use Neighborhood zoning also allows commercial development, and it is assumed that commercial uses will represent a greater share of downtown study area in the future.

There are approximately 1,557,000 square feet in the study area zoned as either General Commercial or Downtown Commercial (see Table 3). Both commercial zoning districts have a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.30, which means the combined eventual build out in these zones could potentially include approximately 467,000 square feet of commercial development. In addition, there are approximately 1,117,000 square feet zoned as Mixed-Use Neighborhood, which allows a maximum floor area ratio of 1.00 for nonresidential uses, so these areas could potentially accommodate an additional 1,117,000 square feet of commercial development in the downtown study area, for a total maximum potential build out of approximately 1,584,000 square feet.

Table 3: Approximate Square Footage by Zoning in the Downtown Study Area

Block	Zoning	Square Feet	Zoning	Square Feet
1	C-G	194000	MU-N	206000
2	C-D	231000	MU-N	150000
3	C-D	186000	MU-N	0
4	C-D	100000	MU-N	91000
5	C-G	91000	MU-N	87000
6	C-G	102000	MU-N	95000
7	C-G	210000	MU-N	179000
8	C-D	223000	MU-N	154000
9	C-D	121,000	MU-N	67000
10	C-D	99,000	MU-N	88000
Total	C-G and C-D:	1,557,000	MU-N:	1,117,000
FAR-Adjusted Total	FAR of 0.30	467,000	FAR of 1.00	1,117,000

Source: Data – Replica, 2023. Table and calculations - Walker Consultants, 2023.

Future Commercial Development Assumptions

The potential build-out of 1,584,000 square feet would represent a commercial density increase of over 600 percent compared with the current non-residential building footprint of just over 250,000 square feet. However, this is unrealistic, as it would involve the redevelopment of almost all parcels, including all residential parcels, and would also mean each redevelopment included the maximum commercial development footprint allowed by code. Furthermore, although the existing commercial building footprint is 250,000 square feet, not all buildings are currently occupied or used in ways aligned with the City’s long-term strategy for the area. Some growth may involve construction that increases the total commercial development footprint, while other growth may simply entail the occupancy of vacant buildings or adaptive reuse that supports the City’s vision for downtown.

Based on these considerations, this analysis makes the following assumptions for the future footprint of commercial development:

- **Base Scenario:** 312,500 square feet by 2045 (25% growth from existing non-residential footprint)
- **Aggressive Scenario:** 375,000 square feet by 2045 (50% growth from existing non-residential footprint)

In the future, the City envisions an economic growth development strategy for the downtown area that prioritizes food and beverage establishments, retail, offices, and health and wellness businesses. The City imagines the following mix of commercial land uses downtown:

- **50% Food and Beverage**
 - 25% Bar - Restaurant
 - 25% Family Restaurant
- **25% Retail**, including retail with a health and wellness focus
- **25% Office**, including offices related to health and wellness

As new commercial developments arise, and existing land uses change and intensify, parking utilization and demand patterns are likely to shift as well.

Shared Parking Model

To estimate the parking demand if the City's economic development strategy comes to fruition, Walker consulted *Shared Parking*, a model created in partnership by Walker, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). The model is designed to project the parking generation of various types of development from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight on a typical weekday and a weekend for every month of the year. The methodology was originally developed in the 1980s and has been a widely accepted industry standard for rightsizing parking facilities over the past 30+ years. However, it is noted that the model assumes suburban contexts with a driving ratio, or share of people driving to the site, at or near 100 percent. By default, it does not account for potential interventions to encourage people to arrive to a downtown via non-driving modes. The model includes the following:

- 1. Base Ratios:** *Shared Parking* starts with inputs for the type and quantity of land use to be analyzed. Each land use has a specific metric considered by the parking industry to be a reliable measure of parking demand for that use. For example, for retail, food and beverage, and office uses, that metric is square footage (gross leasable area or GLA). The model provides a base parking demand ratio for each land use.
- 2. Non-Captive Adjustments:** A shared parking analysis recognizes that people often visit two or more establishments within an area, without increasing the overall parking demand. The noncaptive ratio is an estimate of the percentage of parkers at a land use who are not already counted as being parked at another of the land uses. The term "captive" has been borrowed from market researchers to describe people who are already present in the immediate vicinity and are likely patrons of a second use. For example, it assumes that 2 percent of professional employees dine within the area where they work.
- 3. Presence Factors:** Adjustments are made to the shared parking model to account for parking demand variability by hour of day and month of year. These time-based adjustments are referred to as a "presence" adjustment. Presence is expressed as a percentage of the peak hour demand on a typical day for both time of day and month of the year. The Third Edition of *Shared Parking* provides these presence factors for all land uses. Walker used the presence factors recommended in *Shared Parking Third Edition*.
- 4. Shared Parking Reductions:** The model uses the adjusted hourly and monthly parking demand estimates for each use to determine the total parking supply needed to serve the area during peak hours if parking is shared across uses. Some land uses generate more parking demand during the mornings or afternoons, while others may be busier during the evenings. Similarly, some land uses typically generate more parking demand during weekdays, while others are busier on weekends. Planning for shared parking can help cities and businesses use existing parking infrastructure efficiently and avoid unnecessary public or private investments, freeing up financial resources and improving the walkability and aesthetics of a downtown. For a large study area, shared parking works best if complementary uses that generate parking demand at different times of day or days of the week are located in proximity to one another.

Base and Aggressive Growth Scenario Projections

Inputs and Base Parking Demand Ratios

The base growth scenario assumes that by 2045, the City will have 312,500 square feet of active commercial development aligned with its intended mix of land uses. The aggressive growth scenario uses the same split of land uses but assumes 375,000 square feet of development. Table 4 shows the weekday and weekend parking demand ratios for each land use and calculates the total number of parking spaces that represent the maximum parking demand for the scenario, if all developments are successful and no actions are taken to support alternatives to solo driving. The base ratios are not yet adjusted for non-captive adjustments, presence factors, or shared parking reductions. As the table shows, bars and restaurants are typically associated with especially high parking demand per thousand square feet of development.

Table 4: Shared Parking Model Inputs and Base Parking Demand Ratios

Land Use	Share of Development	Base Scenario Square Footage	Aggressive Scenario Square Footage	Weekday Base Demand Ratio	Weekend Base Demand Ratio
Bar – Restaurant	25%	78,125	93,750	15.25 spaces per 1000 sf	17.50 spaces per 1000 sf
Family Restaurant	25%	78,125	93,750	15.25 spaces per 1000 sf	15.00 spaces per 1000 sf
Retail	25%	78,125	93,750	2.90 spaces per 1000 sf	3.20 spaces per 1000 sf
Office	25%	78,125	93,750	3.50 spaces per 1000 sf	0.35 spaces per 1000 sf
Total	100%	312,500	375,000		

Source: *Parking Ratios – Shared Parking Model. Table - Walker Consultants, 2023.*

Adjusted Parking Demand Estimates

The Shared Parking model calculations included adjustments for non-captive ratios, presence factors, and shared parking reductions to provide the weekday and weekend peak parking demand estimates shown in Table 5. Given the mix of land uses, the model suggested peak demand would occur in the month of December, around 8:00 pm on weekday evenings. The model projected a peak demand of 2,308 spaces for the base scenario, which includes a 29 percent reduction due to shared parking. The parking demand for the aggressive growth scenario corresponded with the assumed increase in the commercial development footprint, for an estimated peak parking demand of 2,766 spaces on a weekday in December at 8:00 pm.

Table 5: Base Growth Scenario – Adjusted Downtown Parking Demand Estimates

	Weekday Peak	Weekend Peak
Shared Parking Reduction	29%	31%
Base Scenario Parking Demand	2,308 spaces	2,193 spaces
Aggressive Scenario Parking Demand	2,766 spaces	2,630 spaces

Source: *Calculations - Shared Parking Model. Table - Walker Consultants, 2023.*

Considerations and Interpretation

These downtown parking demand projections are merely exploratory calculations, and it is important to consider the following when planning for the future of parking in downtown Desert Hot Springs:

- Parking demand ratios are not set in stone. The City also has opportunities to proactively shape and manage parking demand through policy and planning initiatives. If the City prioritizes walkability and sustainable transportation, actual parking demand could be significantly less than what was indicated in the projection, even if development were to occur according to the projection’s assumptions.
- The time horizon for achieving the City’s desired mix of land uses for the downtown area may take longer than this analysis assumes, given that new land use regulations do not apply retroactively.
- If the City is successful in achieving its vision for downtown, the footprint of commercial buildings will expand, and the mix of commercial land uses will approach the City’s goals for the area, but this growth will still happen gradually.
 - In December 2022, the peak demand observed downtown was 324 vehicles, or 18 percent of the current supply of 1,799 spaces.
 - The base scenario’s estimated demand for December 2045 is 2,308 parking spaces.
 - If growth and development over the coming years were to occur linearly, it would take over sixteen years before parking demand in the downtown began to exceed capacity, even if new commercial developments provided no additional parking.

It is also worth considering the future parking demand estimates in the context of existing parking requirements. Under the current development code Section 17.48.040, both projected growth scenarios would result in a large supply of unnecessary parking. Table 6 shows how, if minimum parking requirements were maintained, the base growth scenario would involve a parking supply increase to 2,786 spaces, and the aggressive growth scenario would involve an increase to 3,344 spaces. Excess surface parking supply degrades walkability and the natural environment, and parking garages cost tens of thousands of dollars per space to construct and maintain, so these projections serve as a warning that underscores the importance of developing policy to support shared parking.

Table 6: Existing Parking Requirements Applied to Future Downtown Development Scenarios

Land Use	Base Scenario Square Footage	Aggressive Scenario Square Footage	Existing Parking Requirement	Base Scenario Supply	Aggressive Scenario Supply
Bar – Restaurant	78,125	93,750	1 per 75 sf	1,042	1,250
Family Restaurant	78,125	93,750	1 per 75 sf	1,042	1,250
Retail	78,125	93,750	1 per 250 sf	313	375
Office	78,125	93,750	1 per 200 sf	390	469
Total	312,500	375,000		2,786	3,344

Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

One final consideration is the relationship between parking policy and new development. Minimum parking requirements often constrain new development, and they could potentially prevent the growth scenarios from occurring at all. On the other hand, policy that supports more efficient use of parking resources and minimizes the parking footprint can help make the downtown a walkable destination that attracts visitors and new businesses.

Ultimately, the growth scenarios reveal the potential for parking demand to increase gradually but significantly as new commercial developments locate downtown, and land uses come to align with the City's strategic vision for the area. Proactively developing parking management strategies can help Desert Hot Springs ensure that policies and plans support the City's overarching vision and goals for the future.

Future Industrial Cannabis Area Parking Demand

Methodology

Industrial cannabis is a relatively new land use, and the parking demand associated with this kind of development has not been studied as closely as the parking demand for other uses, such as offices, retail, and food and beverage establishments. Applying the broader "light industrial" category to industrial cannabis may result in inaccurate demand projections. Even if there were well-established parking ratios for industrial cannabis, this broad classification can include a variety of specific activities, each of which may have very different trip generation rates. For example, this category could include growing, trimming, testing, processing, packaging, and distribution. A facility where cannabis is grown as well as processed may occupy a greater footprint than one where it was only processed, but the increased square footage would not necessarily correspond with a proportionate increase in vehicle travel.

Given the uncertainties related to the parking demand for industrial cannabis land uses, this analysis considers actual parking demand observations from a sample of nine facilities and the nearby street parking within the industrial cannabis study area. Demand counts were conducted at these facilities during peak demand hours (between 10am-2pm, capturing the overlap of multiple shifts) on Thursday, December 1st. In addition to counting the vehicles in parking lots, Walker observed 68 vehicles parked on nearby streets, including 56 cars along Two Bunch Palms Trail and 12 cars on San Jacinto Lane. To ensure these vehicles are included in the calculations, the 56 vehicles on Two Bunch Palms Trail are added to the off-street parking demand for the facility at 65000 Little Morongo Road, and the 12 vehicles on San Jacinto Lane are added to the off-street parking demand facilities at 65242 San Jacinto Lane and 65282 San Jacinto Lane, which have a reciprocal parking agreement. These totals are displayed in the Parking Occupancy Observation column in Table 7 below.

The City provided the square footage for each of the nine facilities, and Walker calculated a parking demand ratio for each individual facility, as well as a combined average. Table 7 displays the parking demand ratio for each facility, the total square footage, the total number of vehicles observed, and the composite parking demand ratio from all nine facilities. The composite ratio was .59 vehicles per thousand square feet of development; however, this also includes the Industrial Park, which includes cannabis-related businesses but could include other businesses as well.

Table 7: Observed Parking Demand Ratios

Facility Address	Associated Business	Square Footage	Parking Occupancy Observation	Vehicles per 1000 Square Feet
13300 Little Morongo Road	Desert Hot Springs Green Horizons, Inc. (Med Men)	45,000	10	0.22
13310 Little Morongo Road	NUMACO, LLC	180,900	116	0.64
15850 Little Morongo Road	Industrial Park	309,425	144	0.47
65000 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Med for America, Inc.	381,053	236	0.62
65283 Two Bunch Palms Trail	TBP Indoor Facilities - T2	30,550	8	0.26
65321 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Canndescent, MBC	9,600	18	1.88
65441 Two Bunch Palms Trail	Med for America, Inc.	5,038	25	4.96
65242 San Jacinto Lane and 65282 San Jacinto Lane	San Jac Facilities LLC and A CUT ABOVE, LLC	40,000	34	0.85
Total:		1,001,566	591	.59

Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

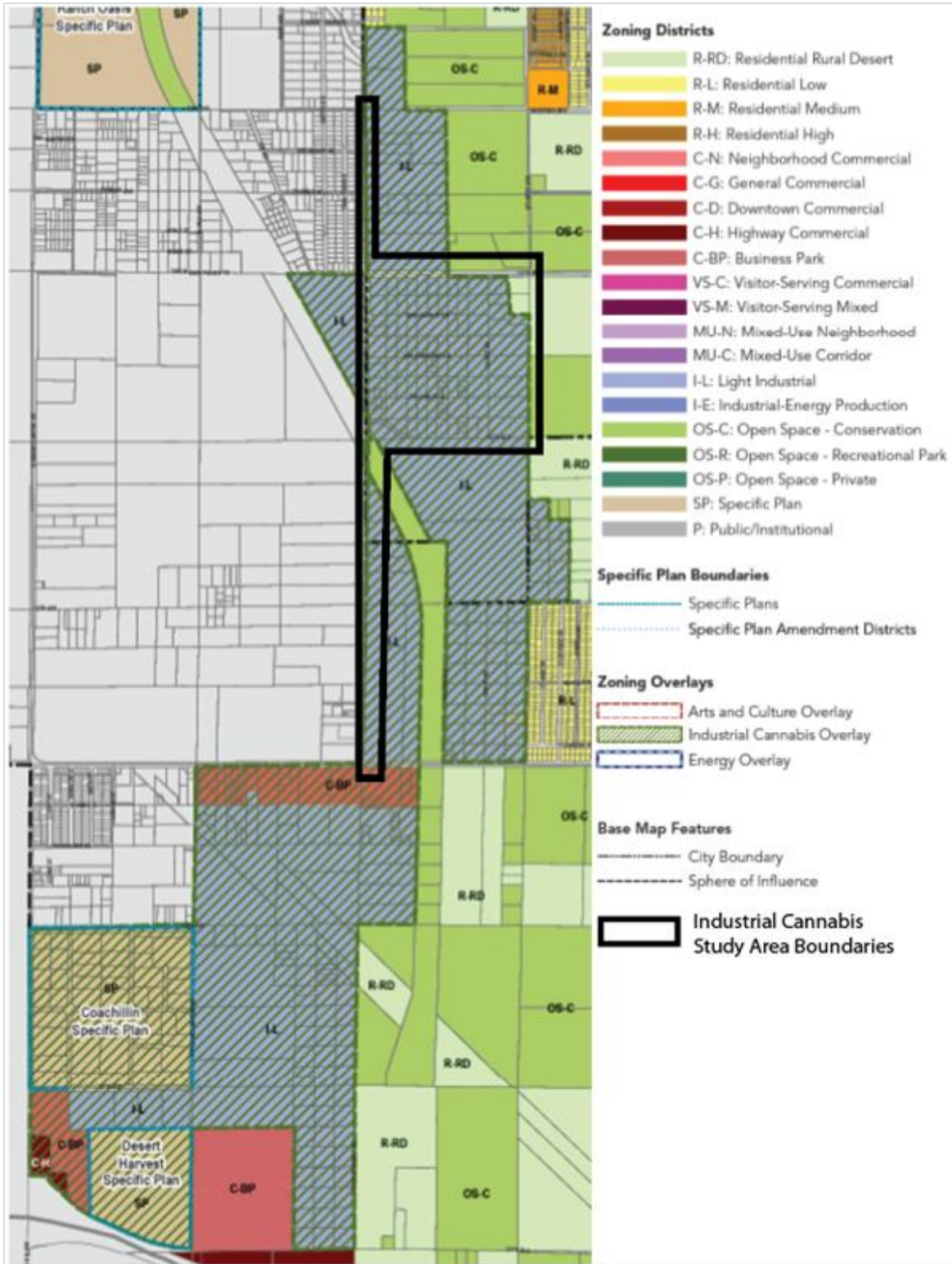
Development Potential

Zoning in the industrial cannabis study area is primarily Light-Industrial, with an Industrial Cannabis Overlay (see Figure 2). A large portion of the land zoned as Light-Industrial falls within the study area boundaries. According to the City’s municipal code subsection 17.16.030, Light-Industrial zoning allows a maximum of 75 percent lot coverage, and a maximum structure height of five stories. In section 17.180, the municipal code specifically allows for marijuana cultivation, manufacturing, testing, distribution, and non-storefront retail facilities within the Industrial Cannabis Overlay.

The study area includes a large amount of undeveloped land and offers significant potential for cannabis-related growth and development. There are currently approximately 575,000 square feet of industrial cannabis developments throughout the Industrial Cannabis Overlay area, and the City anticipates this will grow by approximately 1,425,000 square feet, to a total of approximately 2,000,000 square feet, as the area is built out over the next 10 years. There is enough land within the study area boundaries to accommodate this amount of new development, but it is more likely new industrial cannabis developments will be more evenly spread out throughout the overlay area. This analysis explores base and aggressive scenarios with the following assumptions:

- Base growth scenario: 500,000 square feet of new development within the study area boundaries
- Aggressive growth scenario: 750,000 square feet of new development within the study area boundaries

Figure 2: Industrial Cannabis Study Area Zoning Map



Source: Walker Consultants, 2023.

If the cannabis-related activities of new developments parallel those at existing developments, it could be assumed that the average parking demand ratio calculated in Table 7 would also be a relevant baseline for the new developments. Applying this ratio to the projected development assumptions and adding existing demand observed results in the following peak parking demand projections:

- Base growth scenario: 886 vehicles (295 new demand + 591 existing demand)
- Aggressive growth scenario: 1,034 vehicles (443 new demand + 591 existing demand)

Considerations and Interpretation

The base and aggressive growth scenario parking demands projected for the industrial cannabis area are only exploratory calculations—a glimpse at what could happen if growth patterns continue according to the status quo and the City takes no action to improve parking efficiency and reduce the footprint of surface parking lots. However, status quo development patterns with large areas devoted to private parking facilities may be inconsistent with many of the City’s goals for the future, including:

- To encourage a land use pattern that preserves the City’s desert environment, limits impact to natural habitat areas, and minimizes sprawl.
- To promote economic development through focused land use planning, flexible development standards, and targeted circulation and infrastructure improvements.
- To implement sustainable transportation and land use strategies that can effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled.

The vacant land in the Industrial Cannabis Overlay is highly important for the City’s economic development strategy. As a still-developing City, Desert Hot Springs has the unique opportunity to avoid some of the misguided policies which have led other cities to economically inefficient and sprawling land use. The next chapter will present an analysis of strategies that could help shape parking demand and travel behavior to better align with the City’s numerous goals for economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and community health and wellness.

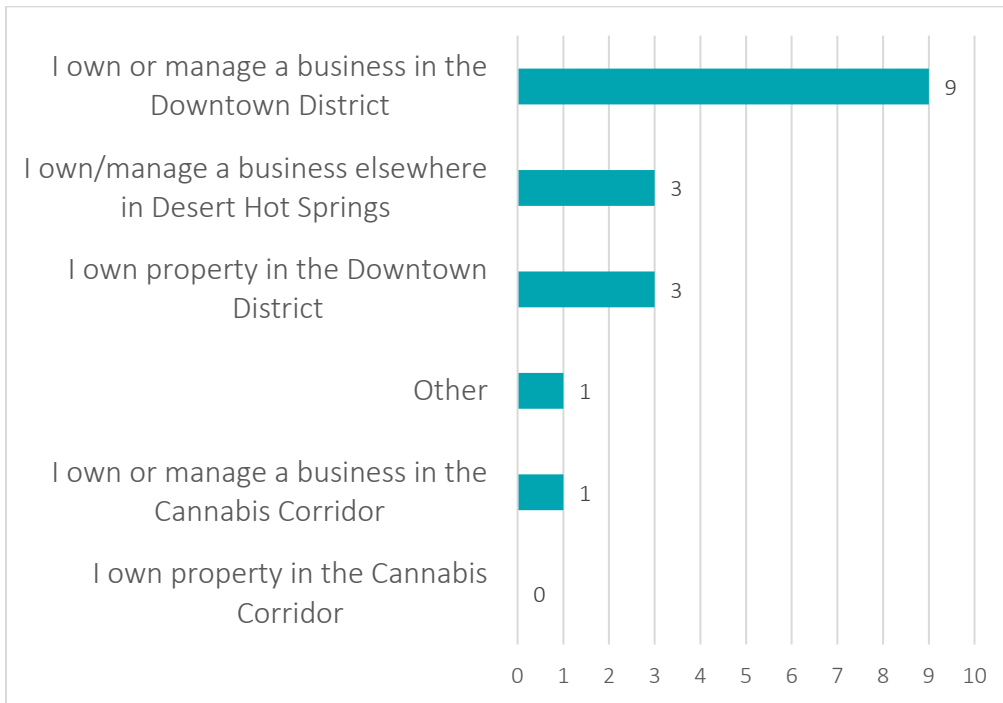
Conclusion

This analysis has shown the potential increase in parking demand—both in the downtown and in the industrial cannabis study area—that may occur as Desert Hot Springs grows and develops. Growth will result in more trips and economic activity for the City, as residents and visitors travel to and from home and work, shopping, and dining opportunities throughout the City. The assumptions used in this analysis show that peak parking demand could potentially increase to between 2,308 and 2,766 vehicles in the downtown, and between 886 and 1,034 vehicles in the Industrial Cannabis study area.

Achieving or even exceeding growth projections will involve ensuring that these places are attractive to visitors, business owners, and developers. If new development proceeds without proactive parking strategies in place, the City risks losing an unnecessary portion of its most valuable real estate to surface parking spaces that sit empty much of the time. With thoughtful planning, however, Desert Hot Springs will be able to accommodate vehicle travel while also advancing toward a future that supports walkability, promotes economic vitality, and where active transportation and shared mobility are widely seen as attractive and viable travel options.

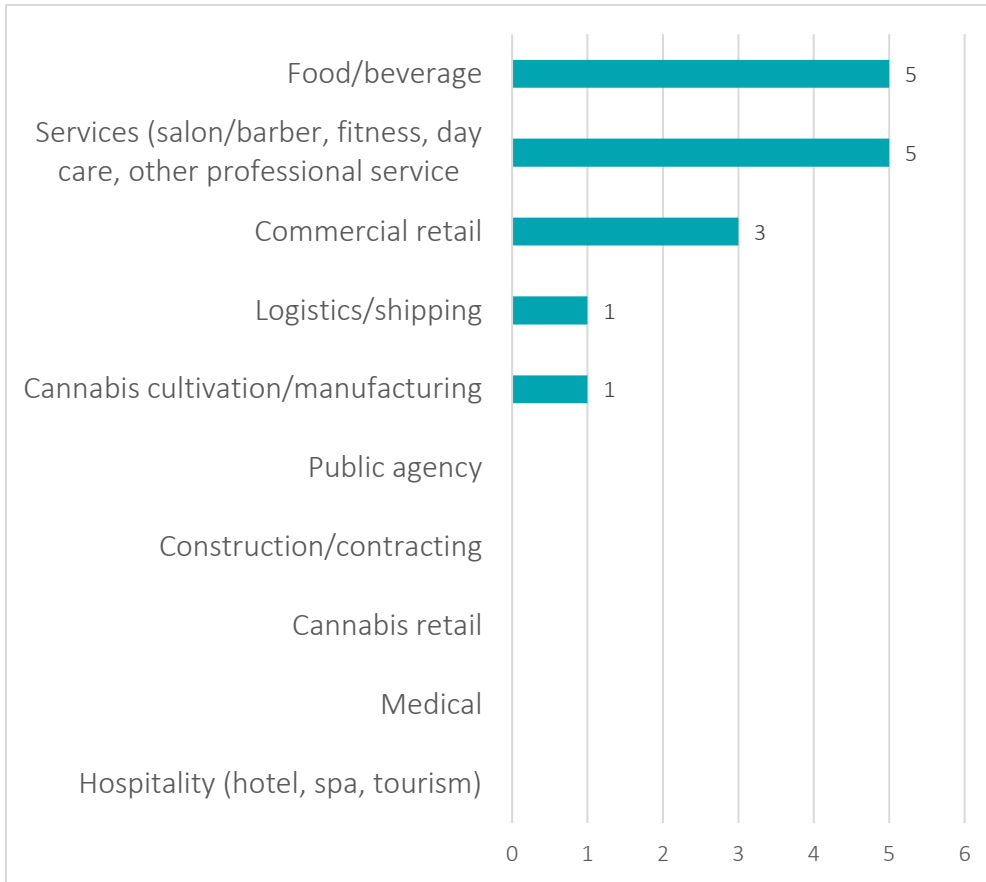
Appendix B: Complete Business Licensee Survey Results

Question 1: Please describe your role in Desert Hot Springs (check all that apply)

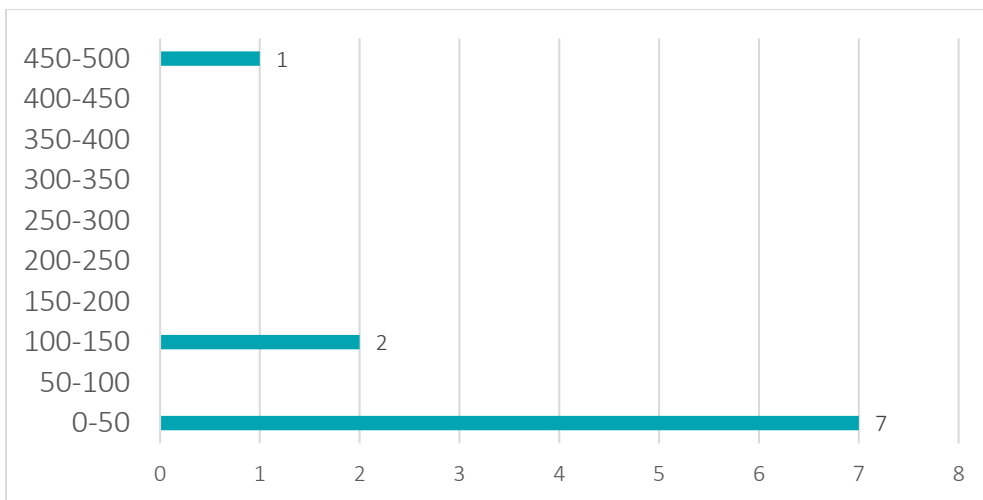


The respondent who selected “Other” noted that they own a consulting business that operates out of their home.

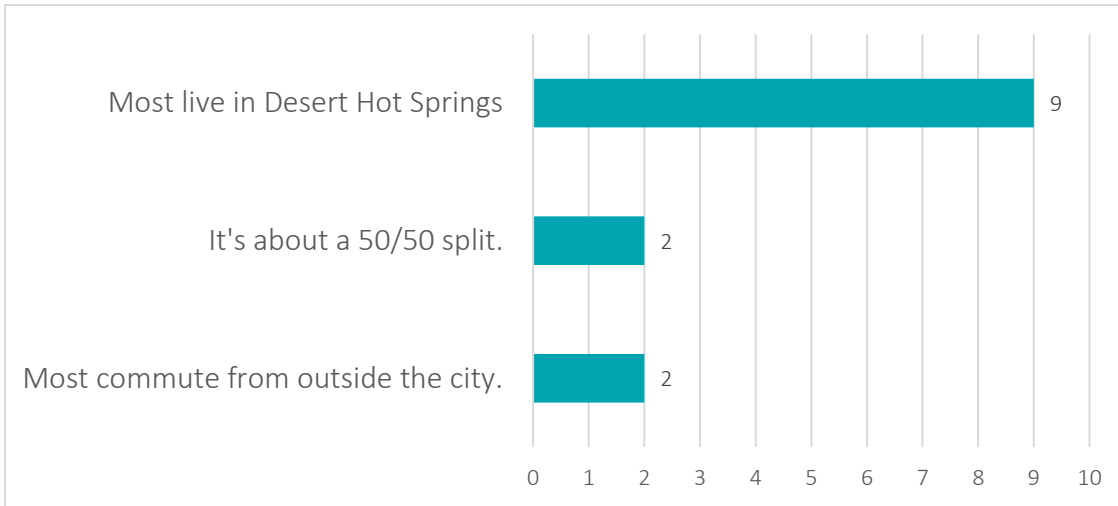
Question 2: What type of business do you work for/own?



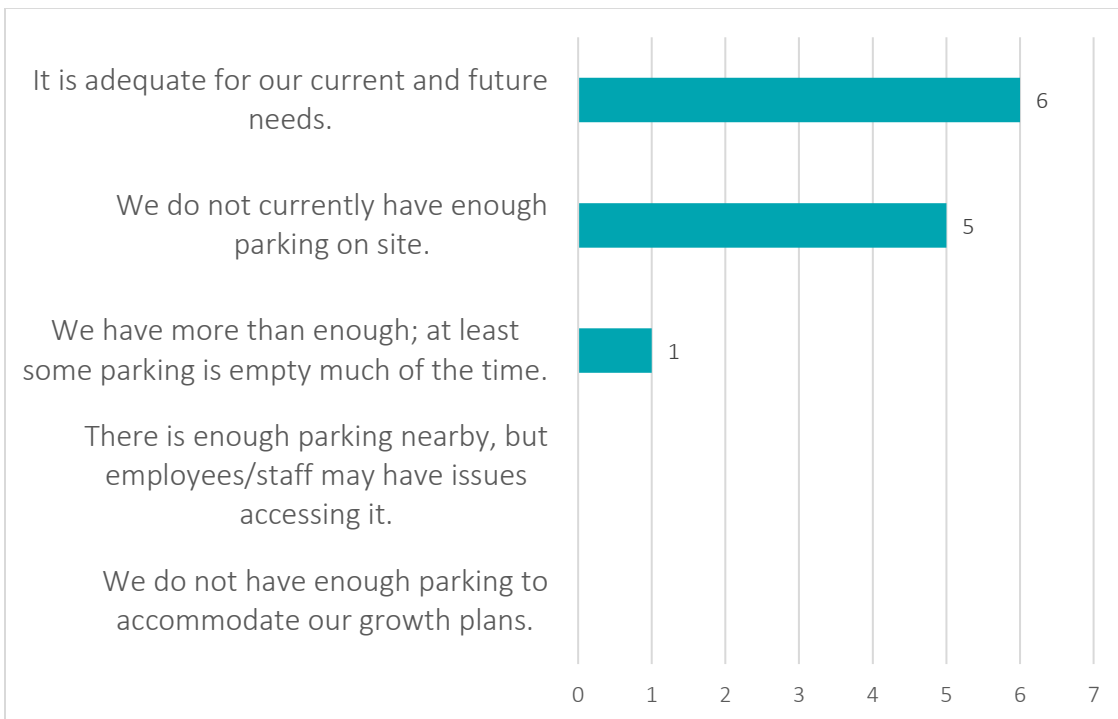
Question 3: Approximately how many employees do you have?



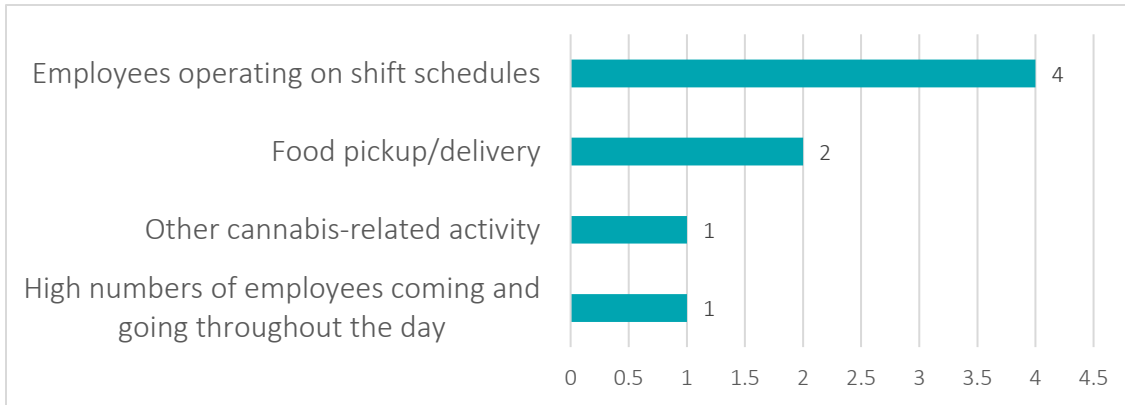
Question 4: Where do most of your employees live?



Question 5: How would you describe the parking demand at your business or property?



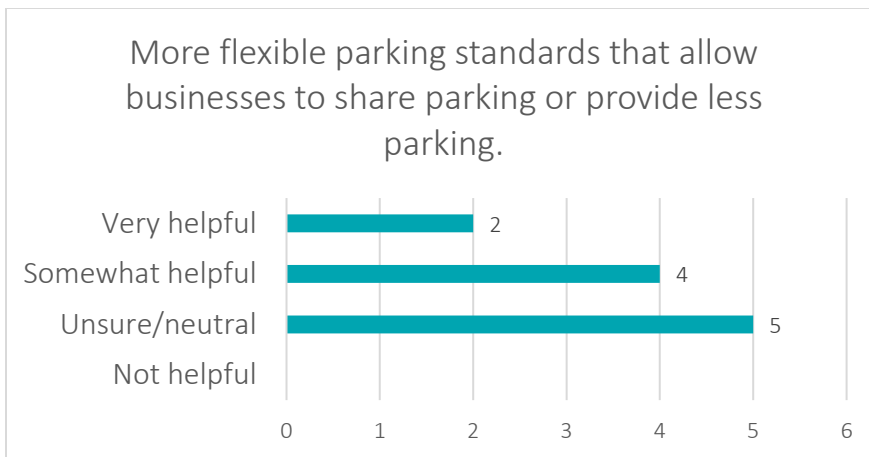
Question 6: Do you have any of the following situations that impact parking demand at your business?

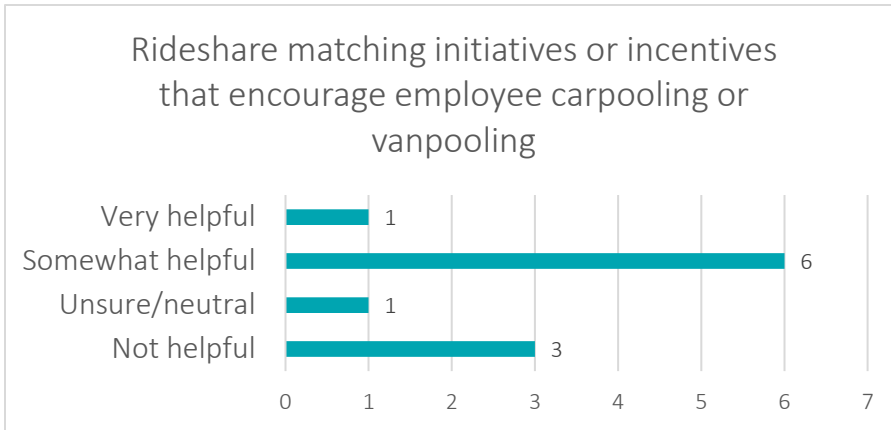
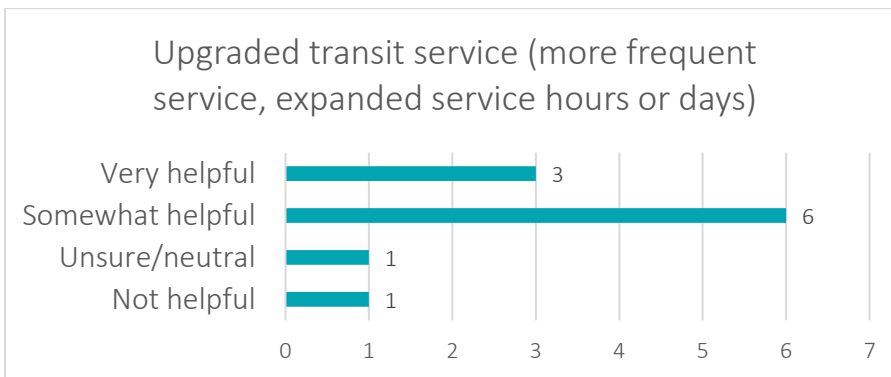
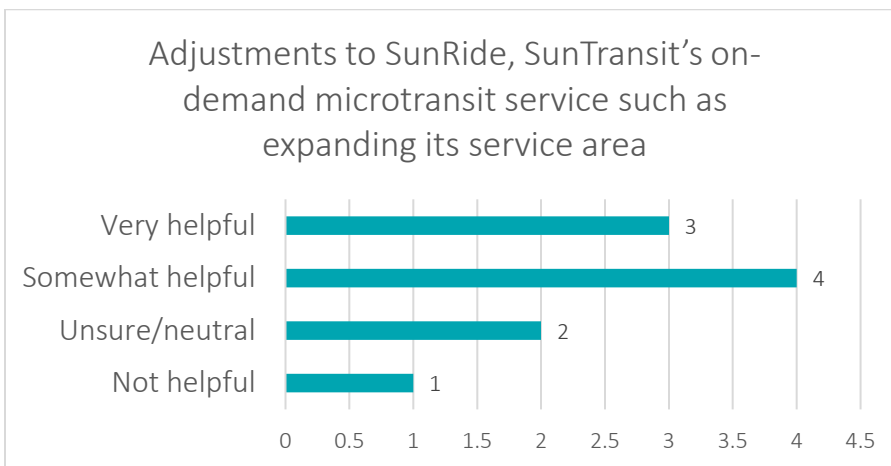


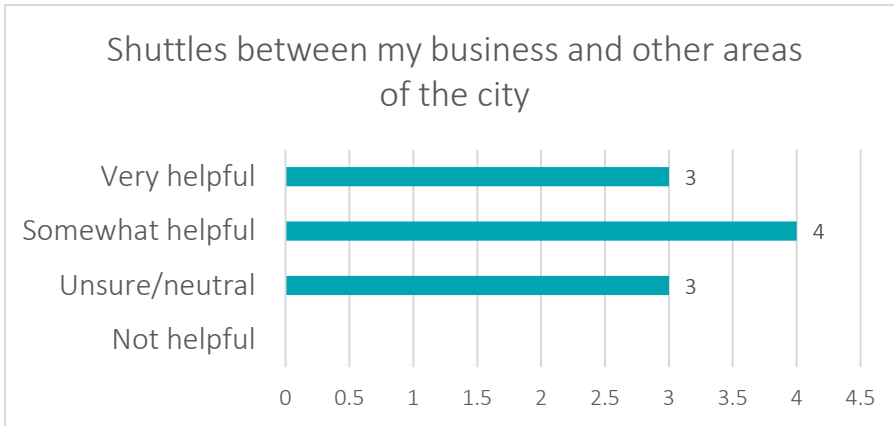
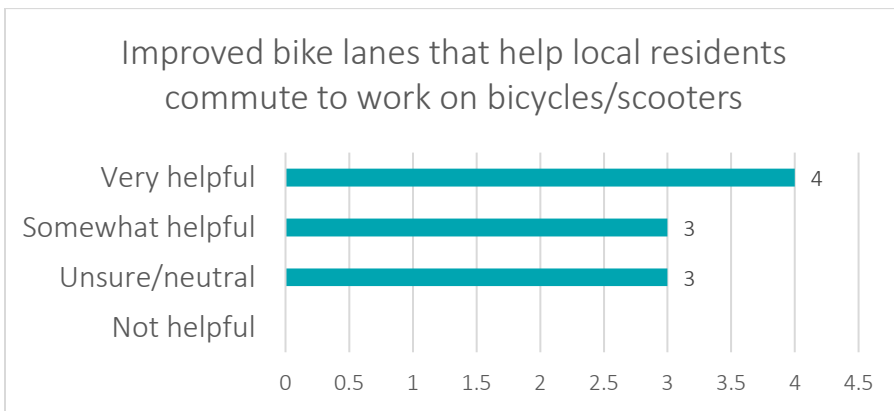
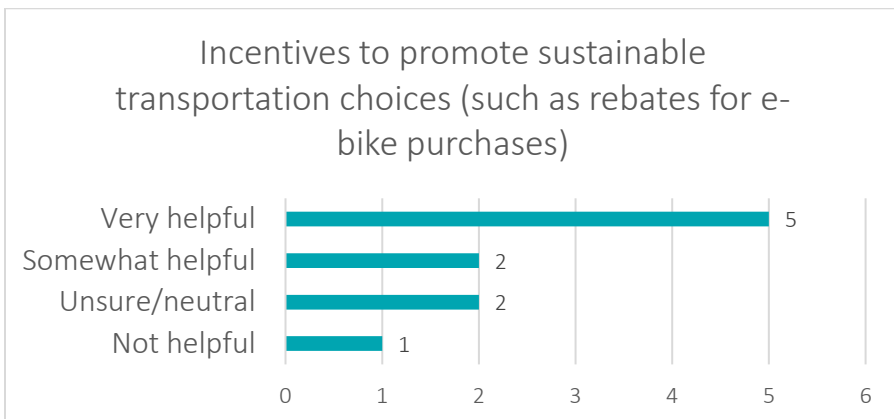
Policy Adjustments

In addition to the general questions about existing conditions at businesses, the survey also contained several questions about potential policy or infrastructure changes that could help address parking and transportation needs for employees. Business-owning respondents were asked to rank each initiative from “not helpful” to “very helpful.” The options and the responses to them are illustrated in the charts that follow.

Option 1



Option 2

Option 3

Option 4


Option 5

Option 6

Option 7


The survey also included an open-ended question to invite additional input. The responses are listed in the bullet points below.

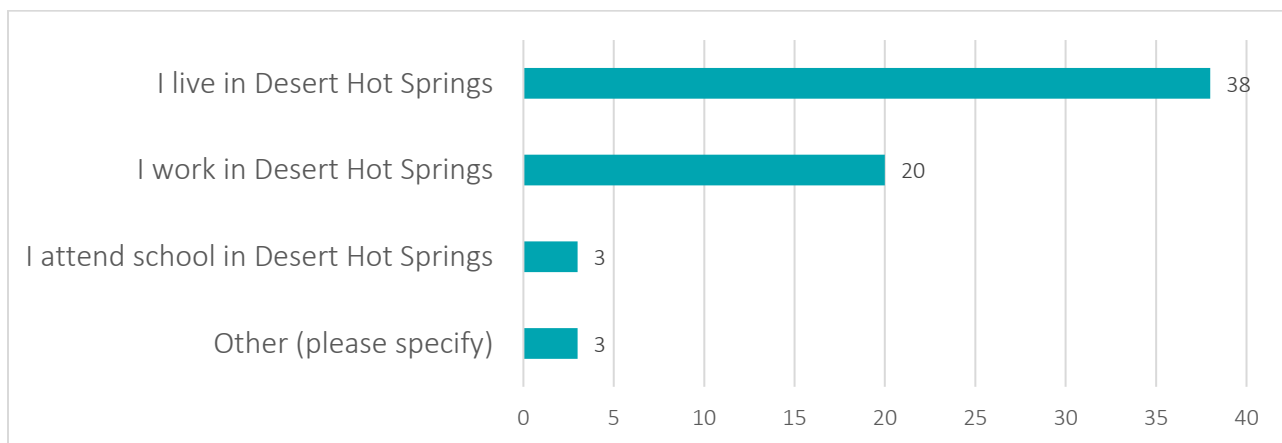
“Do you have any ideas for parking or transportation policies or programs that would help your business or attract new businesses to the area?”

- “The problem I see with this concept is. You are relying on groups of entry level cannabis employees to feed your downtown business and shops. Being a business owner I have seen these groups of people smoking weed, causing trouble in groups and questioning having them around. Please take in to consideration I don’t see how entry level cannabis employees would be the main focus to helping the downtown business. In the past I have personally seen groups of entry level cannabis employees come together and create more harm than good. The entry level employee is a male under 30, that doesn’t have a lot of money and smokes a lot of weed. Not sure that is clientele businesses downtown are wanting to be as the main focus.”
- “Center median parking”
- “Sidewalks and adequate street lighting. Slow down the traffic through the Palm/Pierson corridor to accommodate street parking. Customers don’t feel safe parking their cars on Palm due to high rates of speed and narrow street. There are no visible No Left/u-turn signs on Palm at Acoma going south and First going North causing traffic accidents and congestion.”

Appendix C: Complete Community Survey Results

Multiple Choice Questions

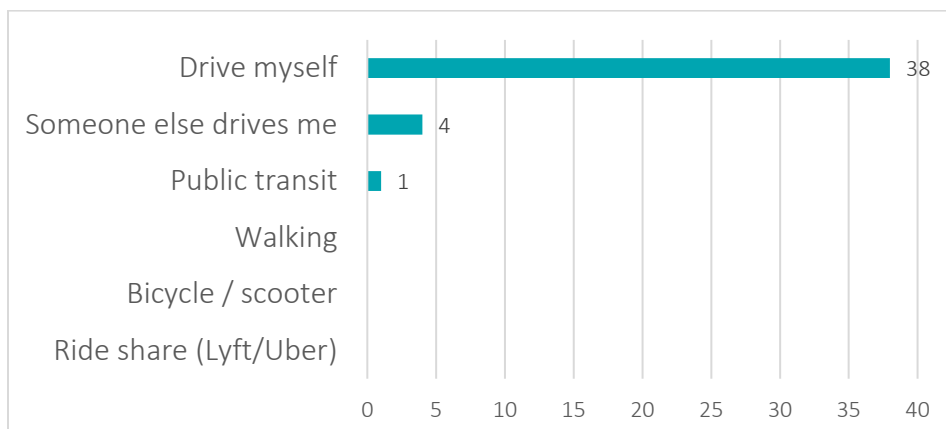
Question 1: Please describe your relationship to Desert Hot Springs. (Check all that apply)



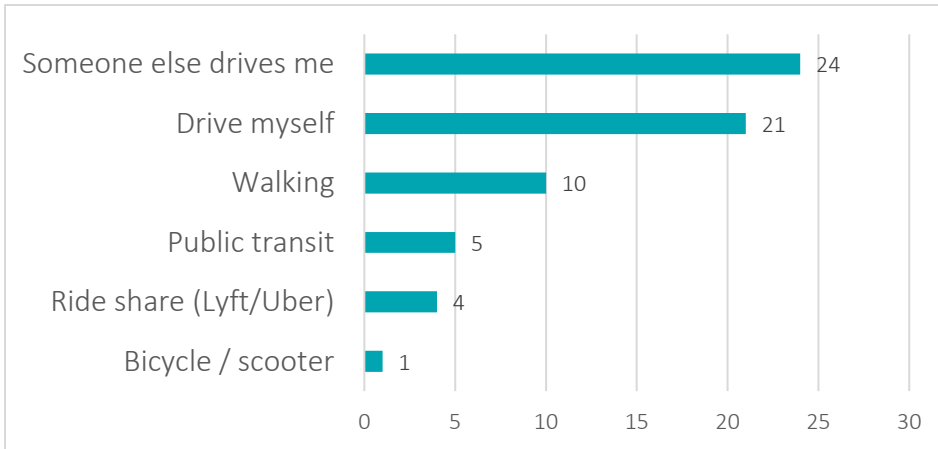
Respondents who selected "other" provided the following details:

- "I play in Desert Hot Springs"
- "I own a business in the corner of Palm Dr and Acoma Ave"
- "I am a bookkeeper for a business in Desert Hot Springs."
- "I work, live and own property in desert hot springs"

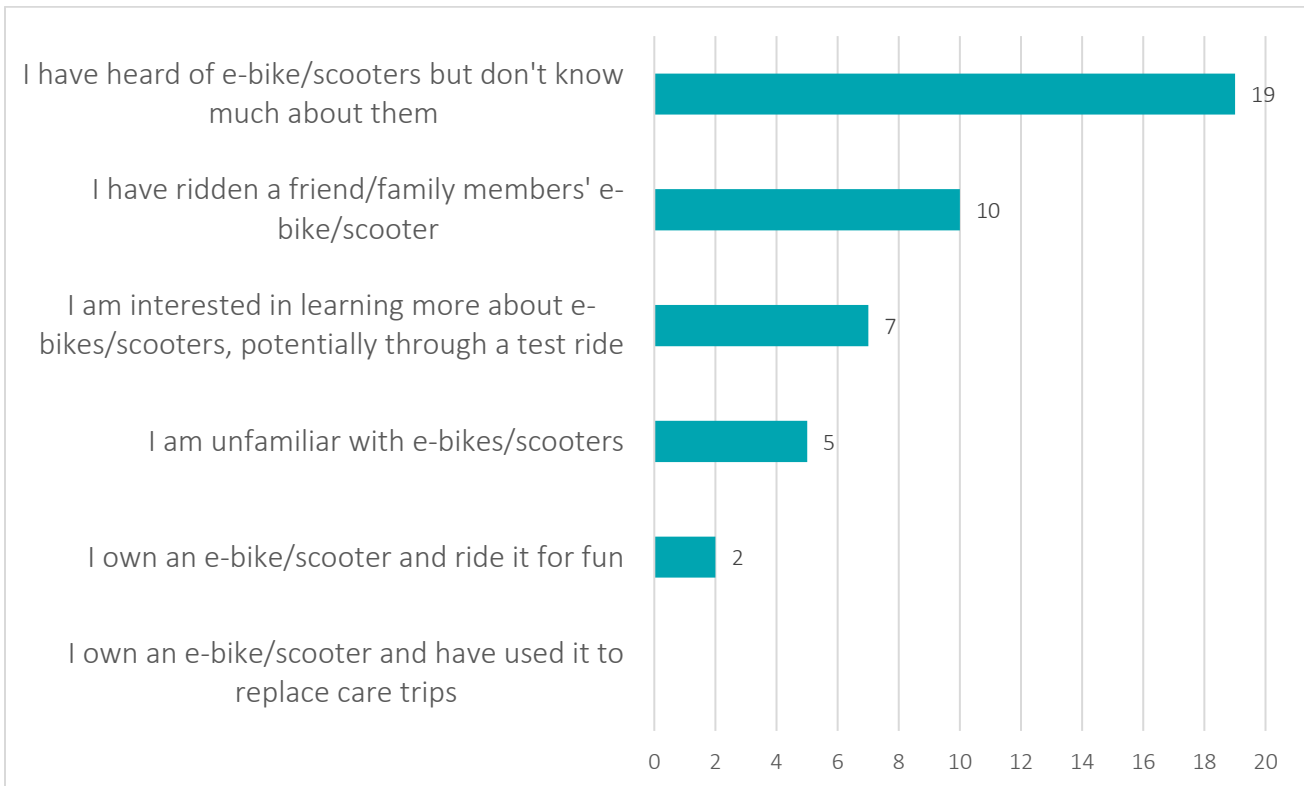
Question 2: What form of transportation do you use for most trips?



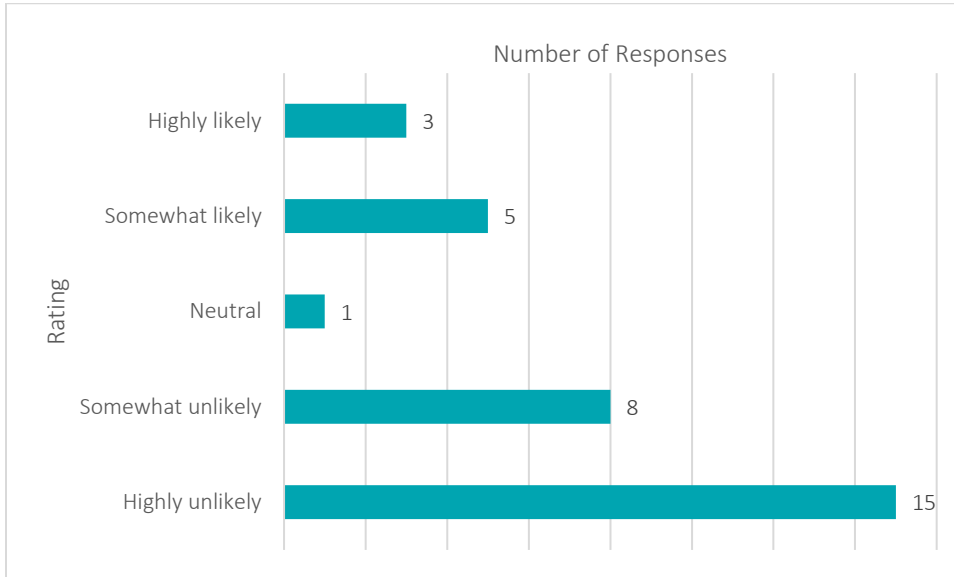
Question 3: When you are not using your primary form of transportation, how do you travel? (Check all that apply)



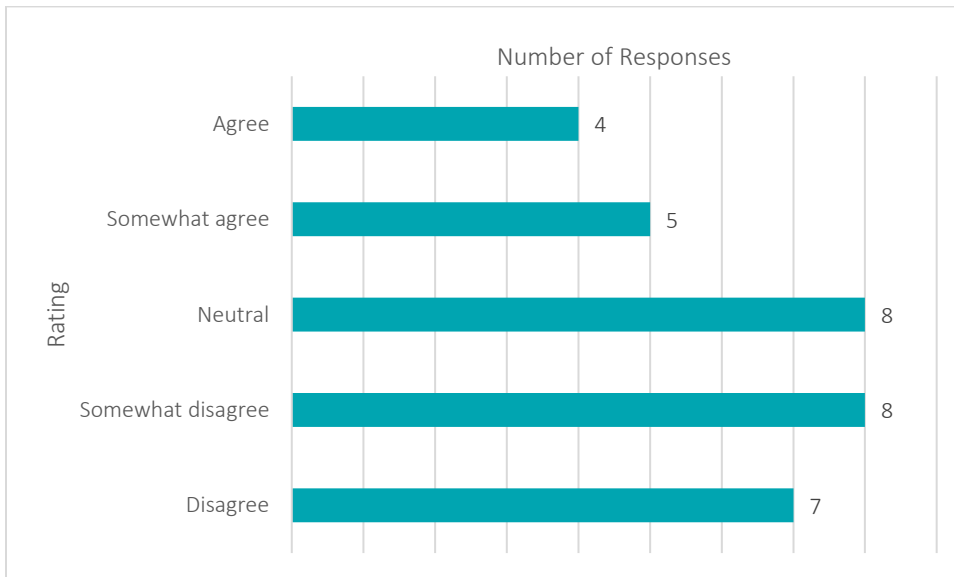
Question 4: E-bikes and e-scooters (bicycles/scooters that are partially powered by a battery) are a popular new option to get around. How would you rate your familiarity with e-bikes? (Check all that apply)



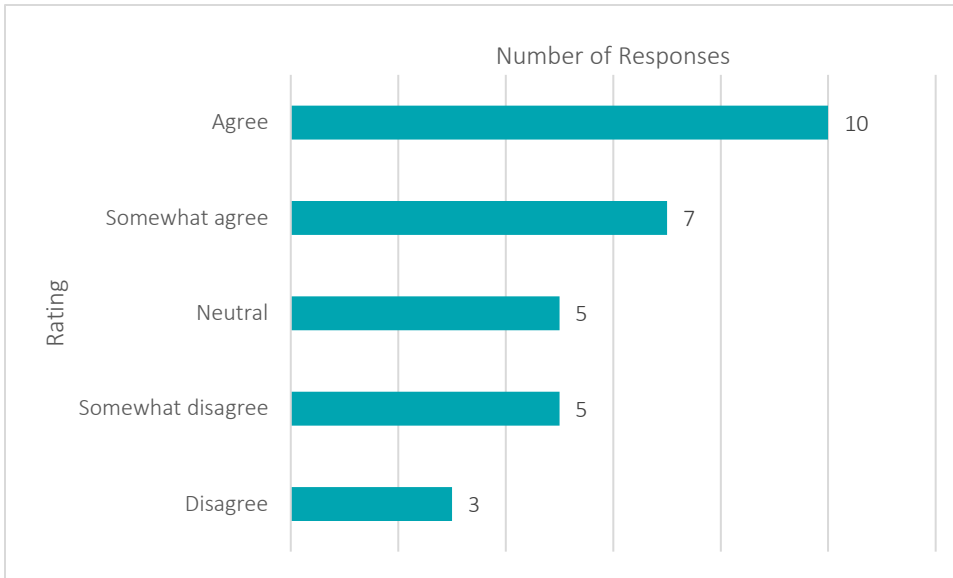
Question 5: E-bikes/scooters have potential to help people replace car trips with a more sustainable option. If Desert Hot Springs had safer bike infrastructure and secure parking, how likely would you be to switch to an e-bike/scooter for some of your trips?



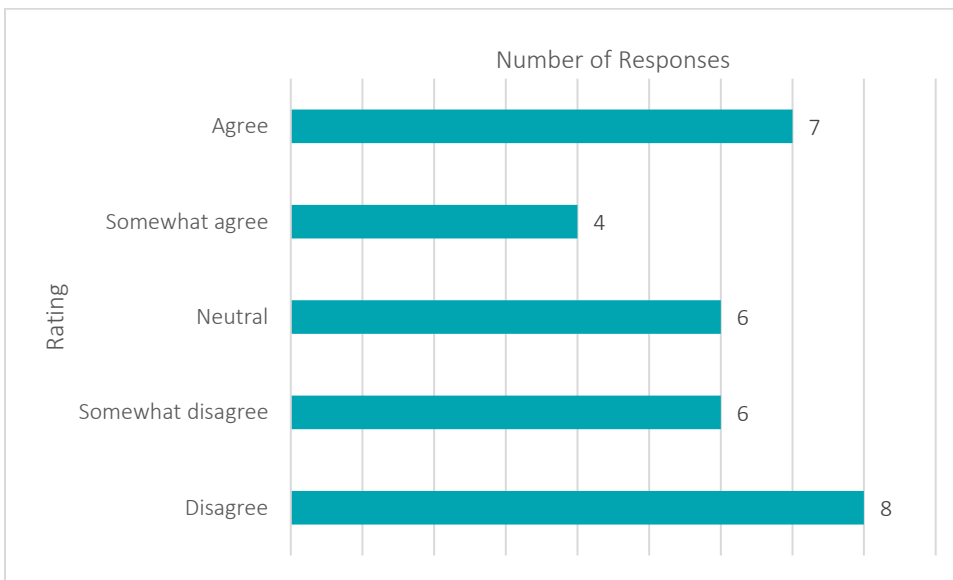
Question 6: Finding parking in Desert Hot Springs is generally easy.



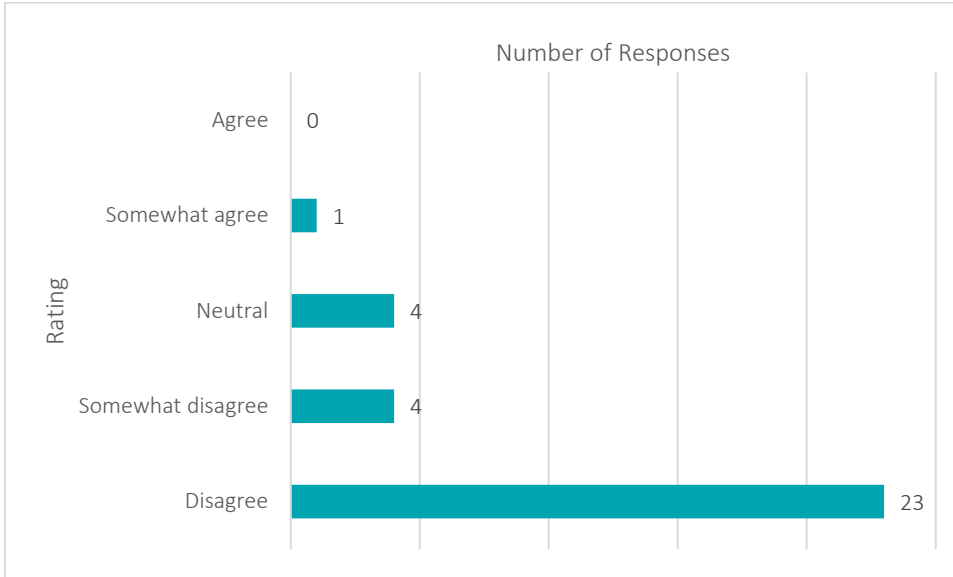
Question 7: I generally feel safe walking to/from my parked car.



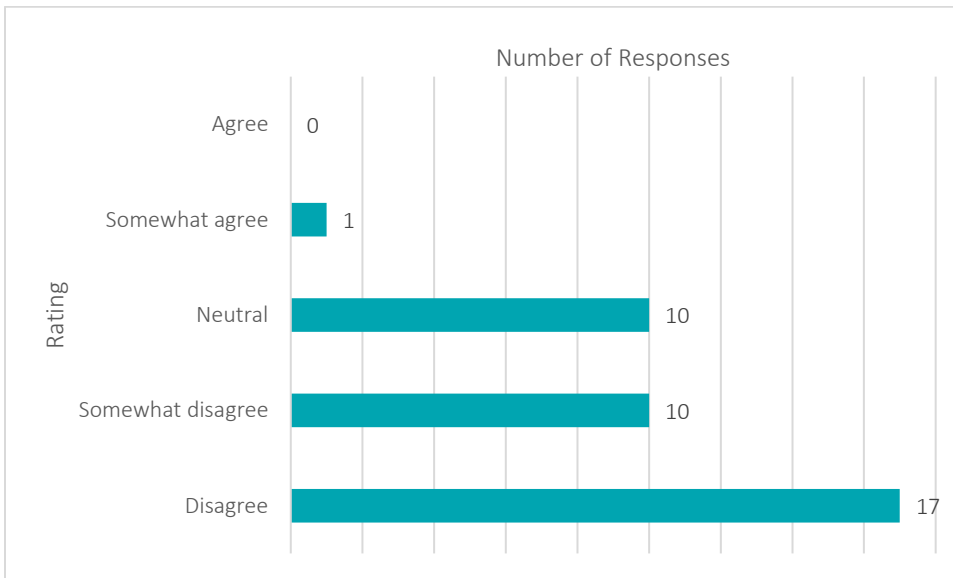
Question 8: I would be willing to park in a central location (such as a shared parking lot) if it meant I could walk to/from multiple destinations.



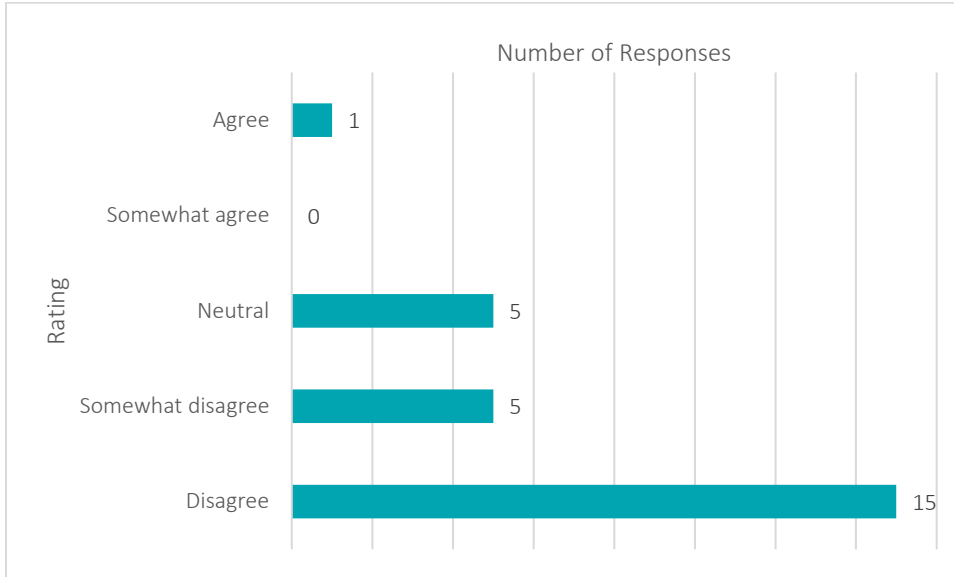
Question 9: Where there is excess parking, I would support re-purposing it for some other use such as parks, event spaces, outdoor dining, or bike and pedestrian infrastructure.



Question 10: It makes sense for parking facilities to shared among multiple uses if they can be.



Question 11: The City's parking management plan should support environmental goals (such as habitat protection and reducing pollution).

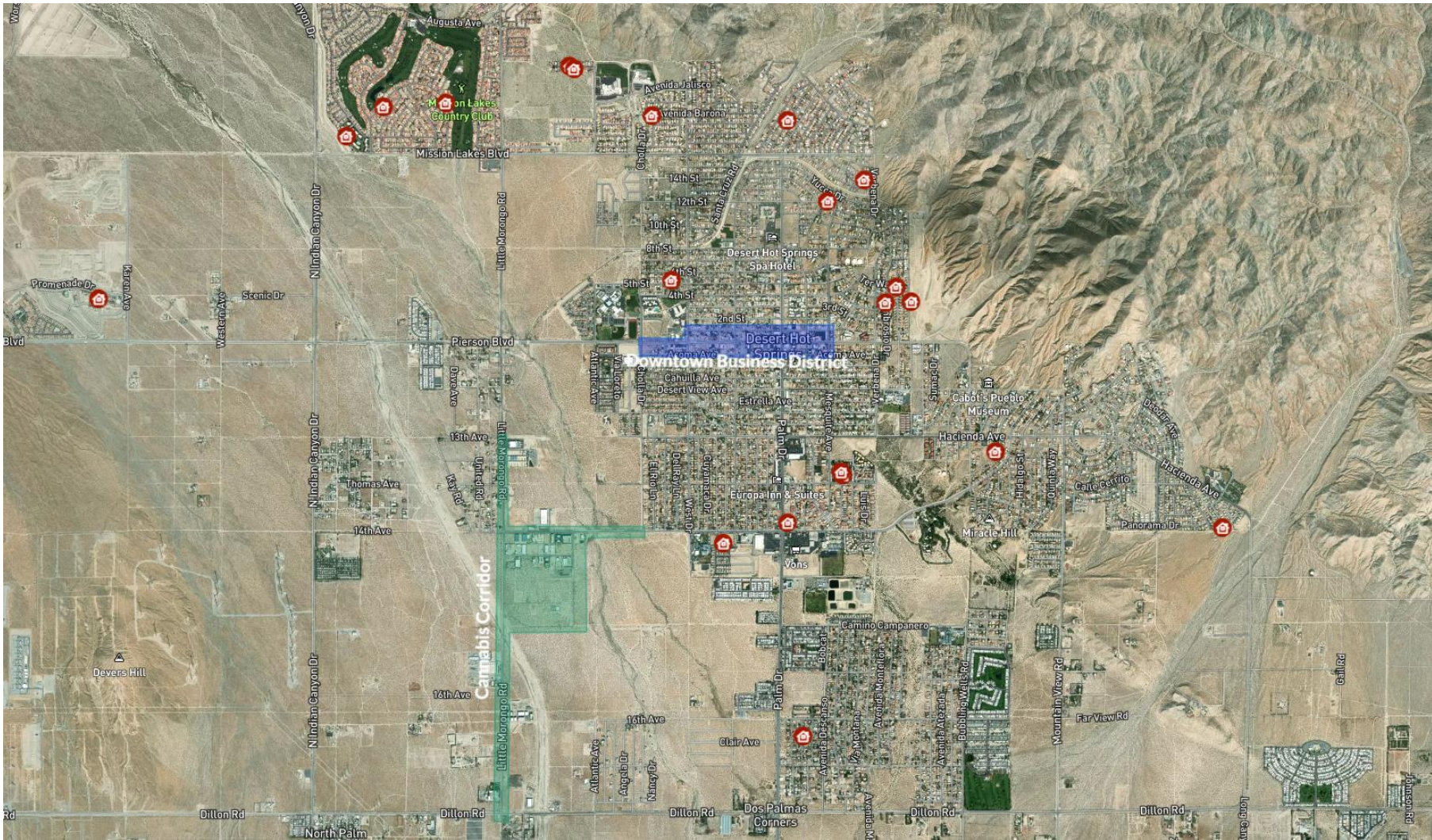


Geospatial Questions

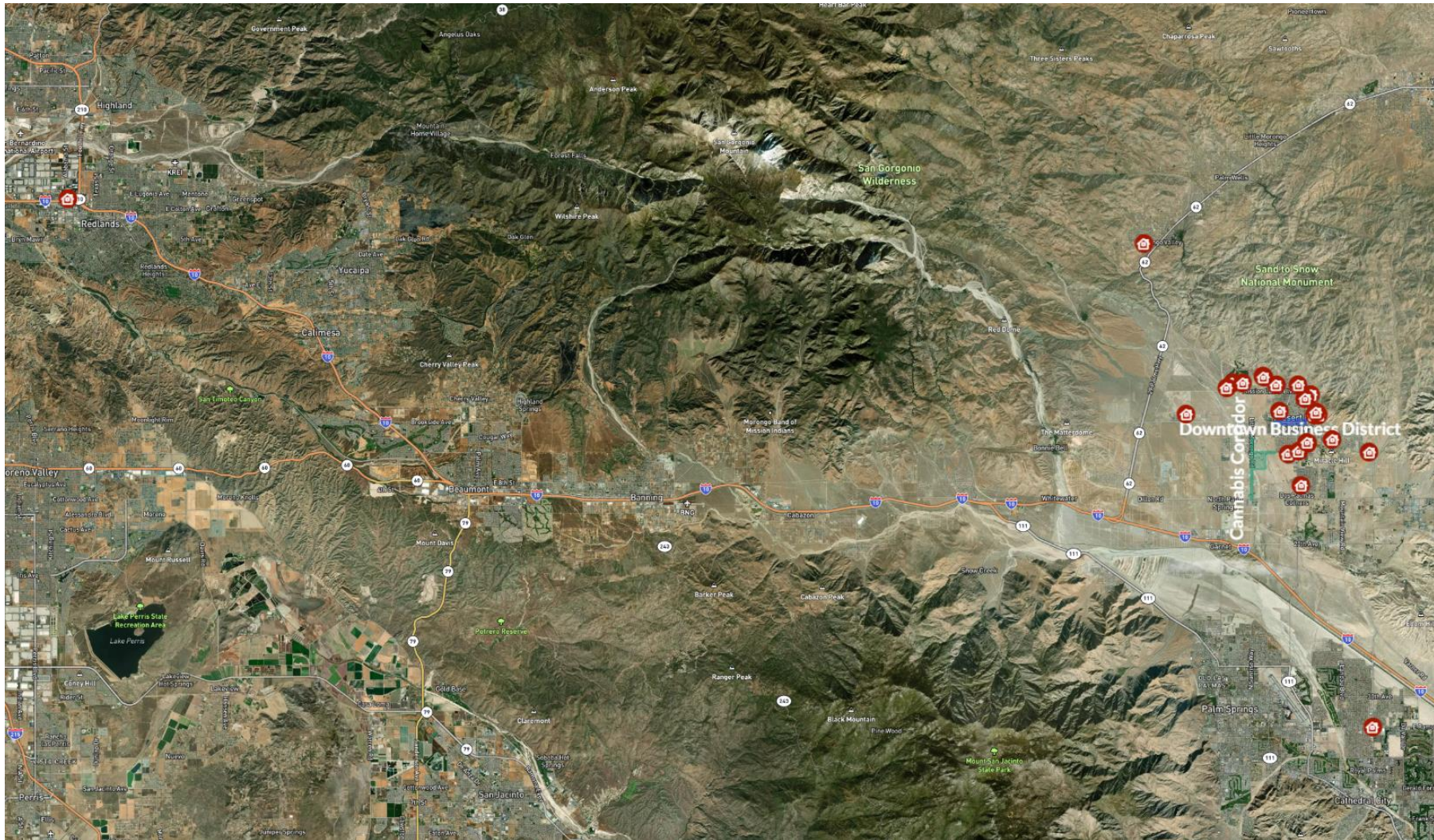
The survey contained several questions designed to gather feedback that has a geospatial element. Respondents were asked to “pin” locations on the map where they identified issues and where they would like to see specific improvements to address those issues. Screenshots of each layer of feedback are provided below.

The blue and green shaded areas in each screenshot illustrate the study areas of the downtown study area and industrial cannabis study area, respectively, but respondents could provide input throughout the City. The extent of each map shown was selected to enhance visibility of the data; areas of the city that did not receive input in a selected category are not shown. The underlying data gathered was also captured in a format that can be used by future planning efforts to map and evaluate the information received.

Respondent Approximate Home Locations

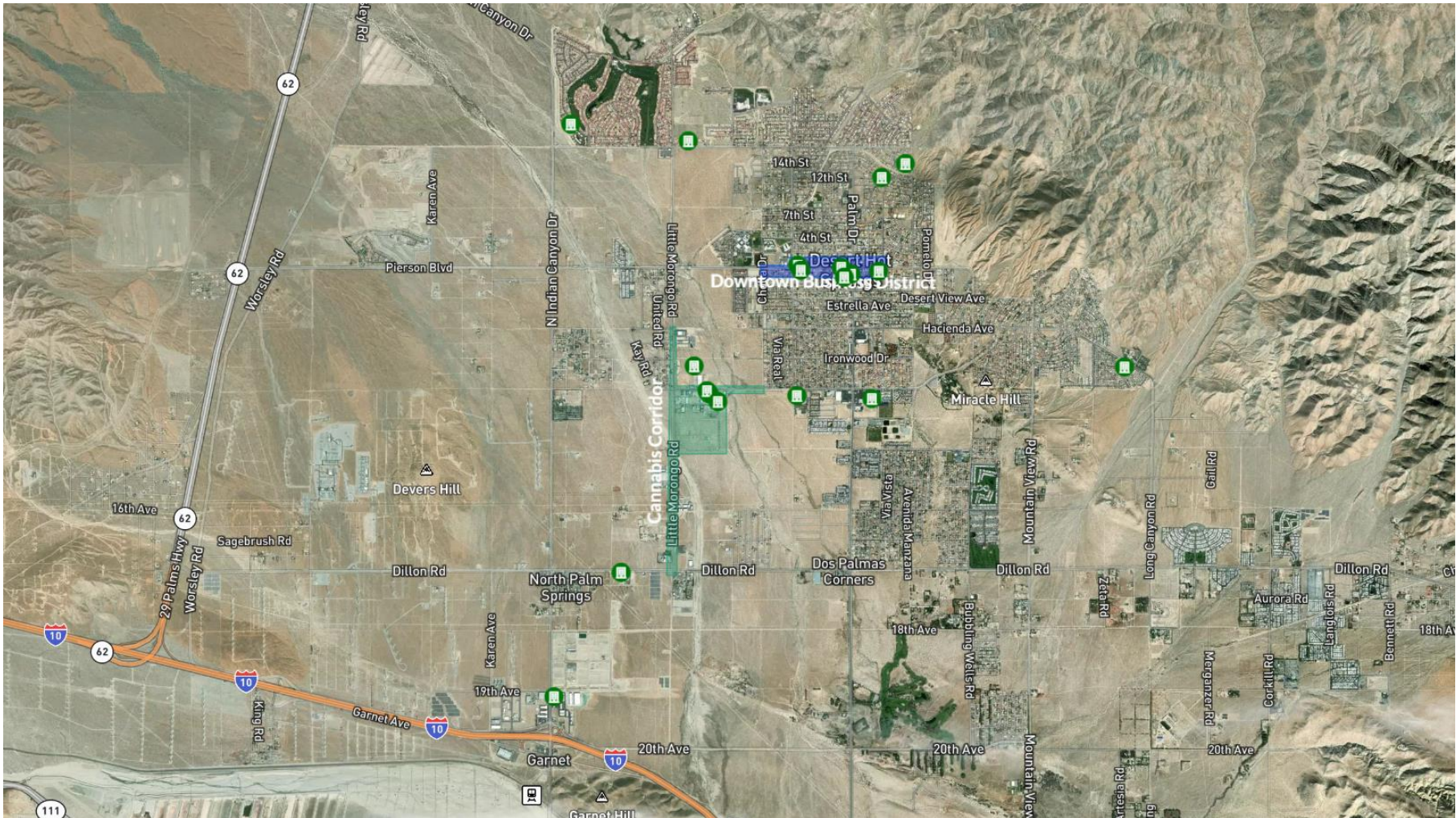


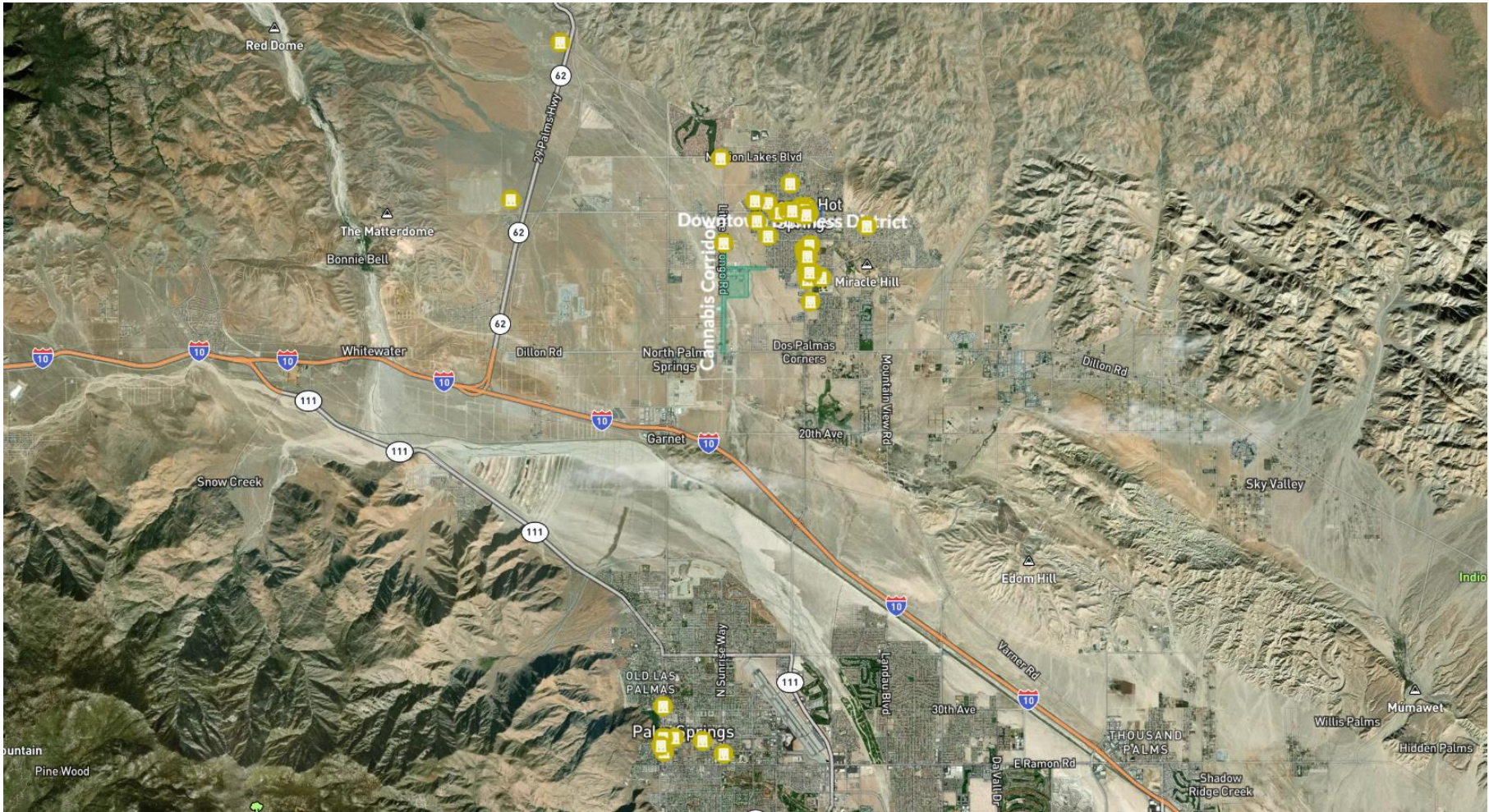
Respondent Home Locations (Wide View)



Three respondents also live outside of Desert Hot Springs in Morongo Valley, Palm Desert, and Redlands.

Respondent Work Locations

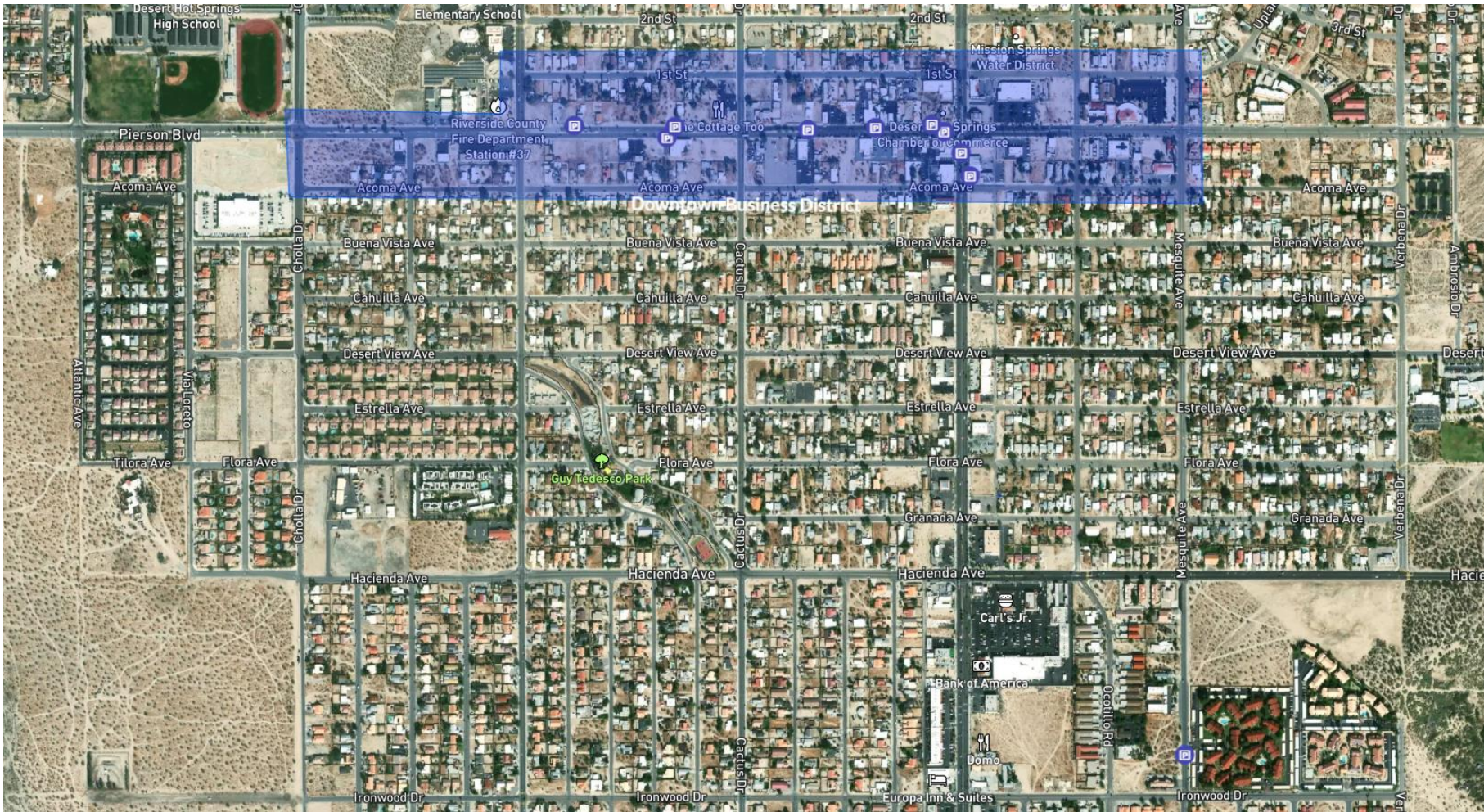


Respondent "Other Important Locations"

Other locations that were important to survey respondents included the commercial districts of Palm Springs and locations along State Route 62 west of Desert Hot Springs.

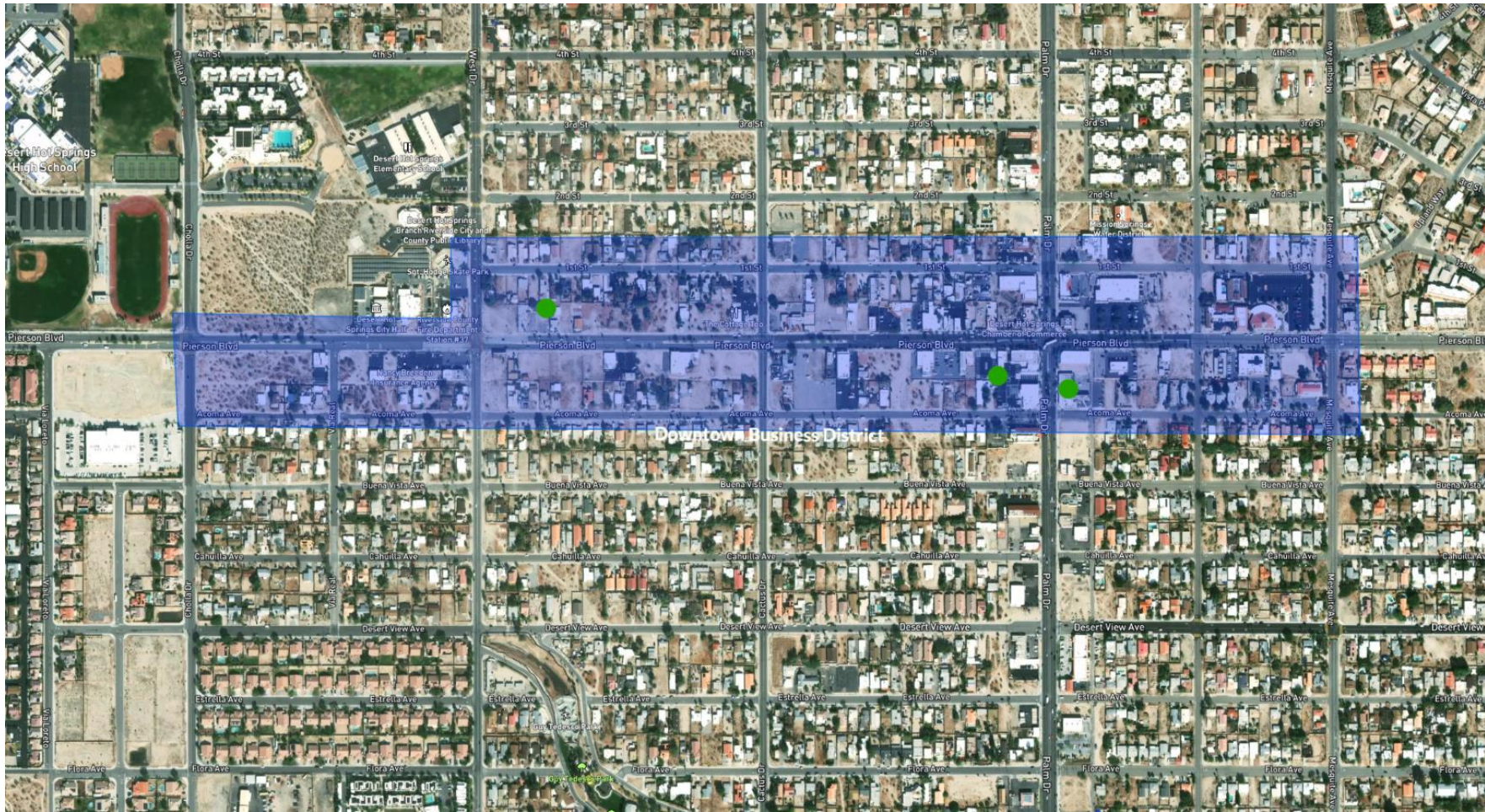
Issues Identified

Issue Identified: Lack of Parking – Downtown



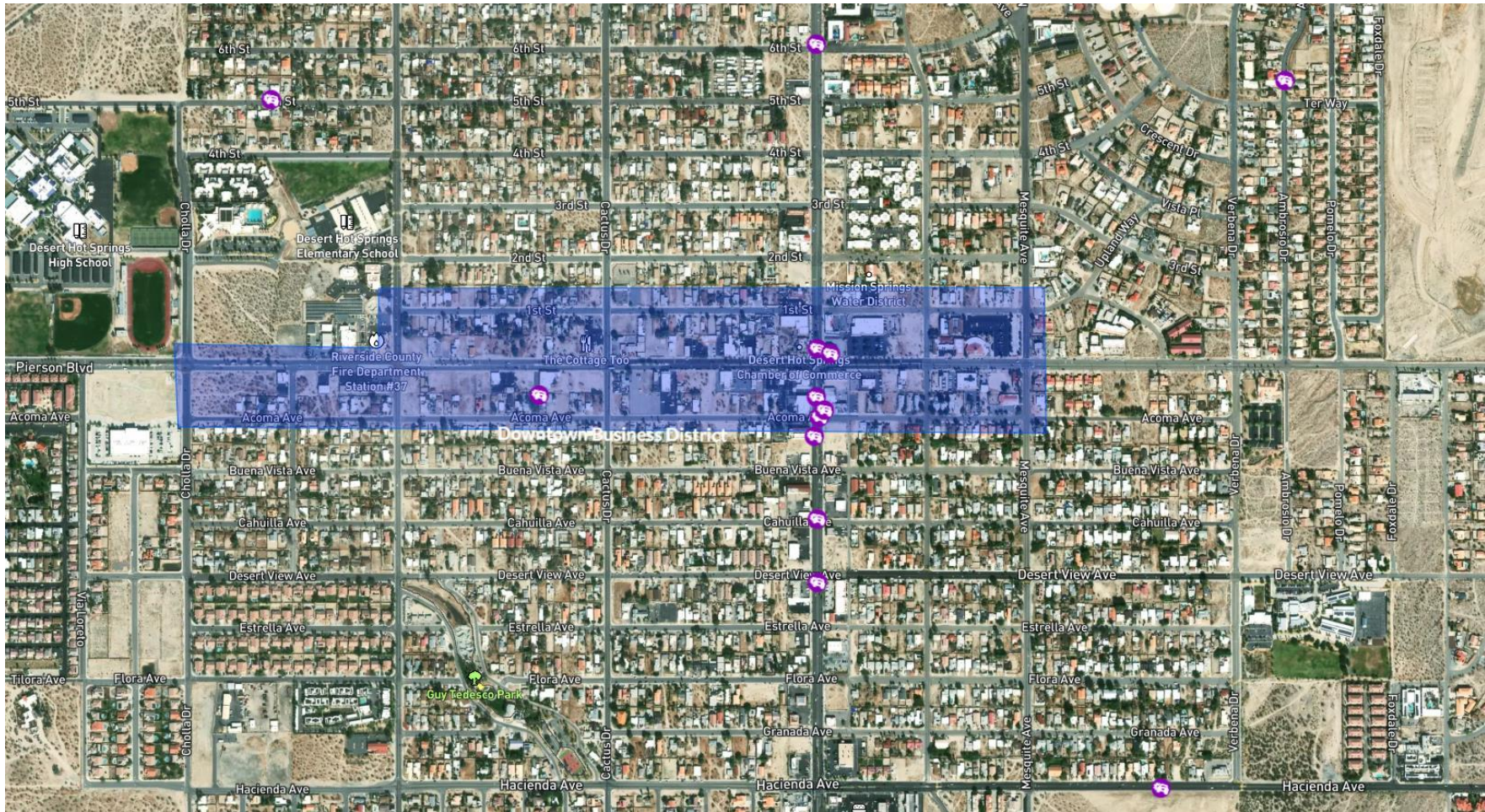
Respondents found that there was a lack of parking in the downtown area primarily near some commercial businesses, with several pins placed near the intersection of Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

Issue Identified: Unclear Where to Park



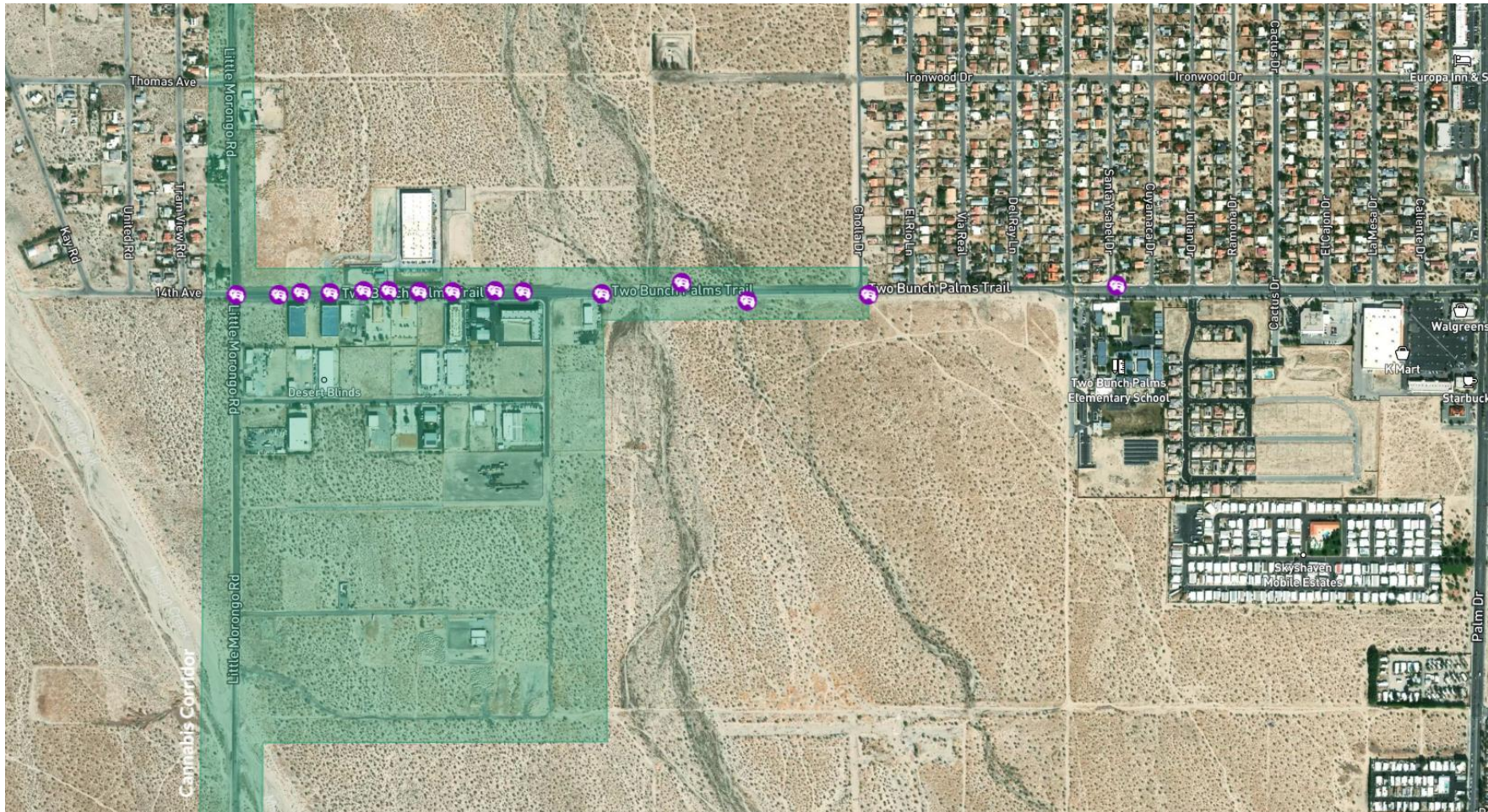
Respondents found that it was unclear where to park at business located near Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard (where businesses have small parking lots that may be accessible from behind the business) and on the western end of the study area.

Issue Identified: Unsafe Driving (Speeding/Swerving) – Downtown



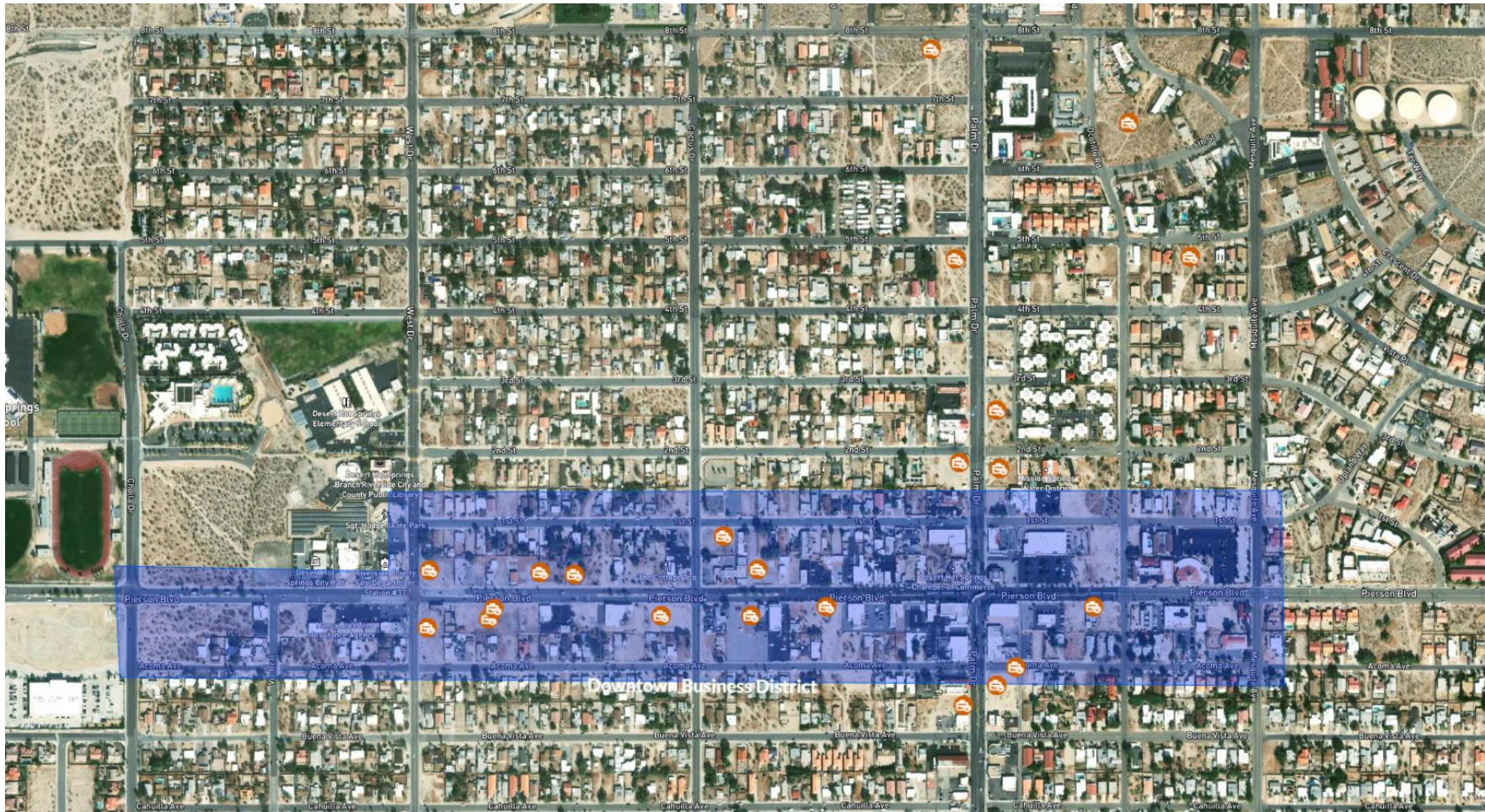
The majority of responses about unsafe driving were clustered north-south along Palm Drive. Some instances of unsafe driving were also observed in neighborhood streets along 5th Street and Hacienda Avenue.

Issue Identified: Unsafe Driving (Speeding/Swerving) – Industrial Cannabis Study Area



Survey respondents noted unsafe driving consistently along Two Bunch Palms Trail in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area.

Issue Identified: Vacant/Underused Property – Downtown



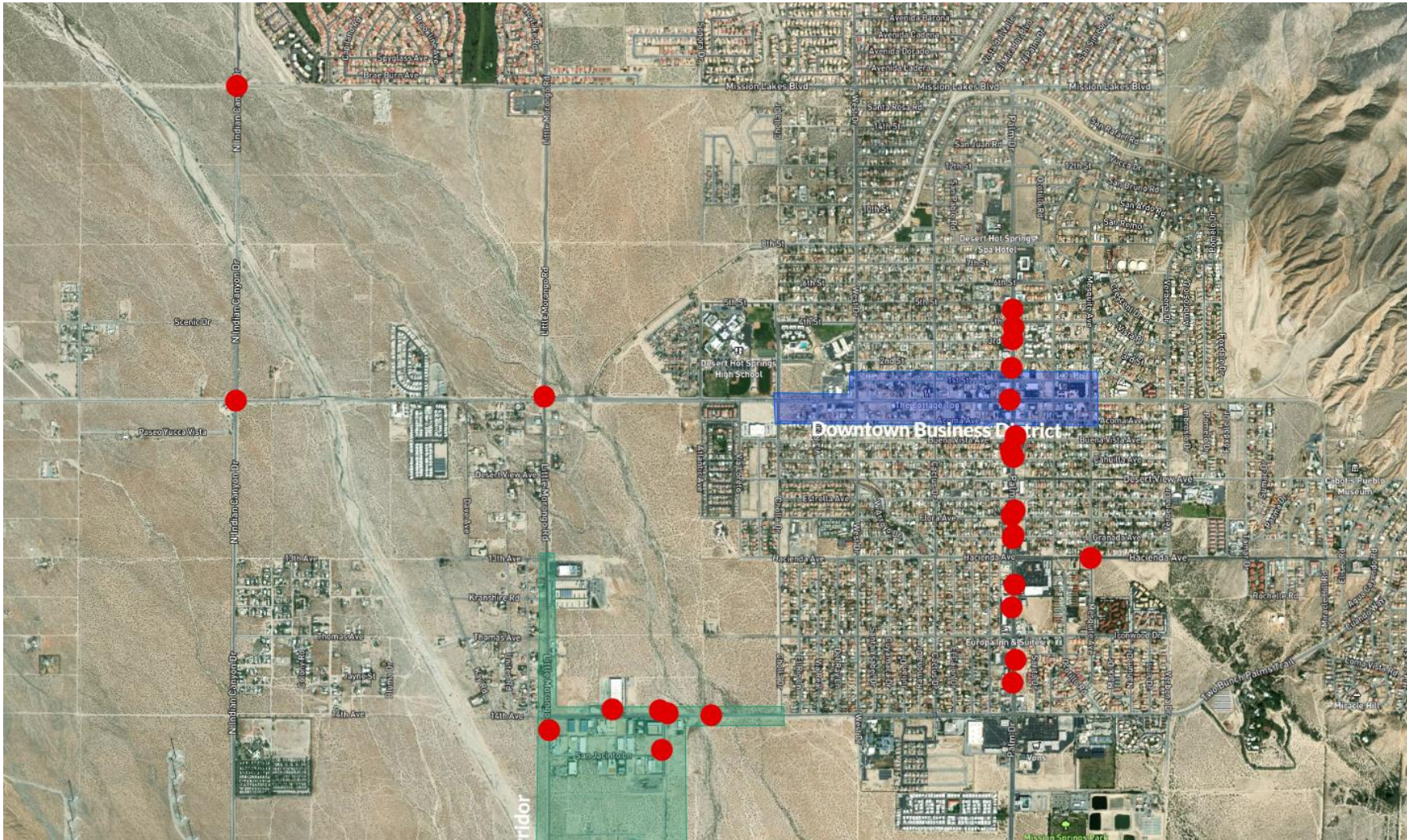
Survey respondents noted vacant or underused properties throughout the Downtown study area and areas farther north.

Issue Identified: Vacant/Underused Property – Industrial Cannabis Study Area



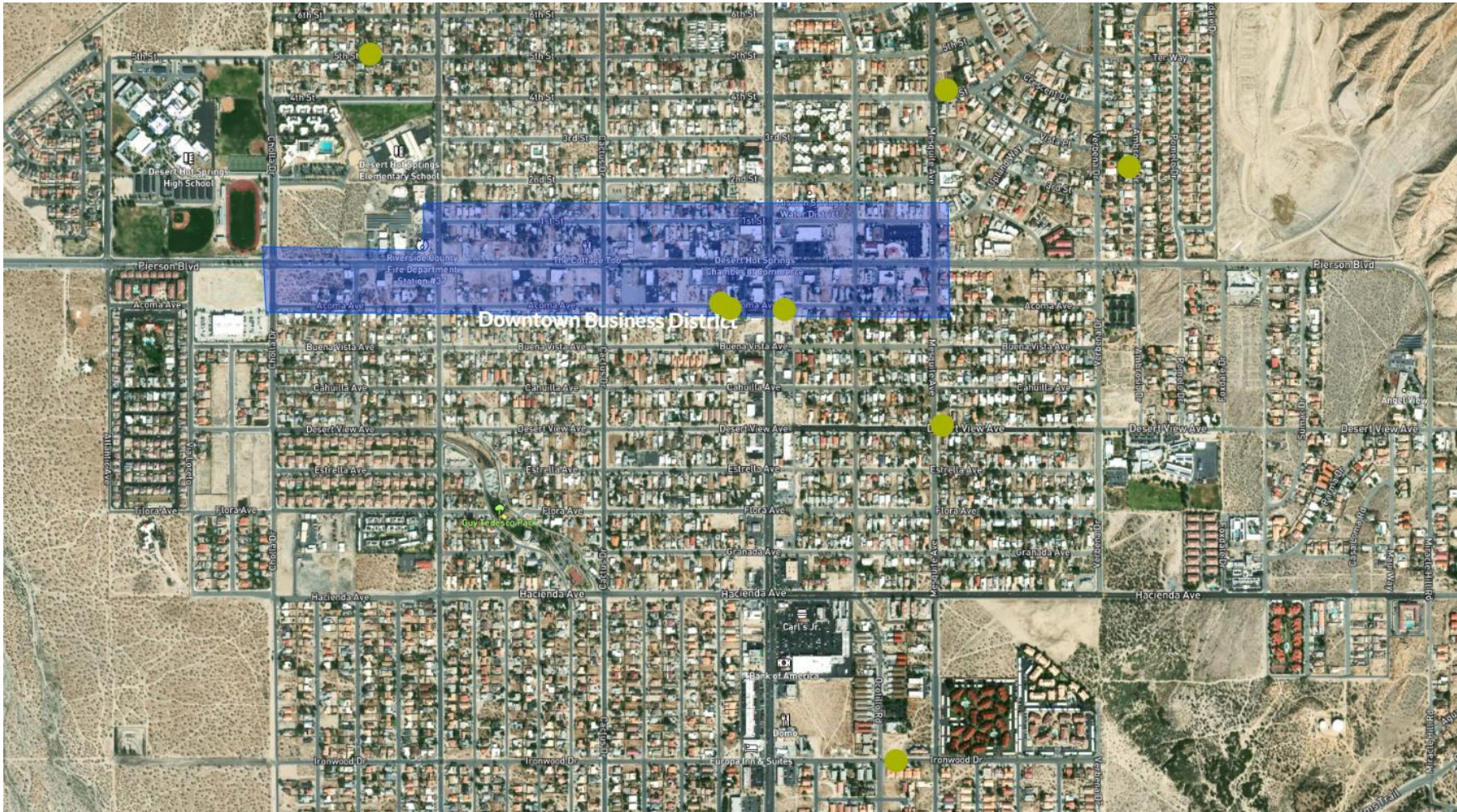
Survey respondents noted several vacant or underused properties along Two Bunch Palms Trail.

Issue Identified: Unsafe Crossings – All Areas



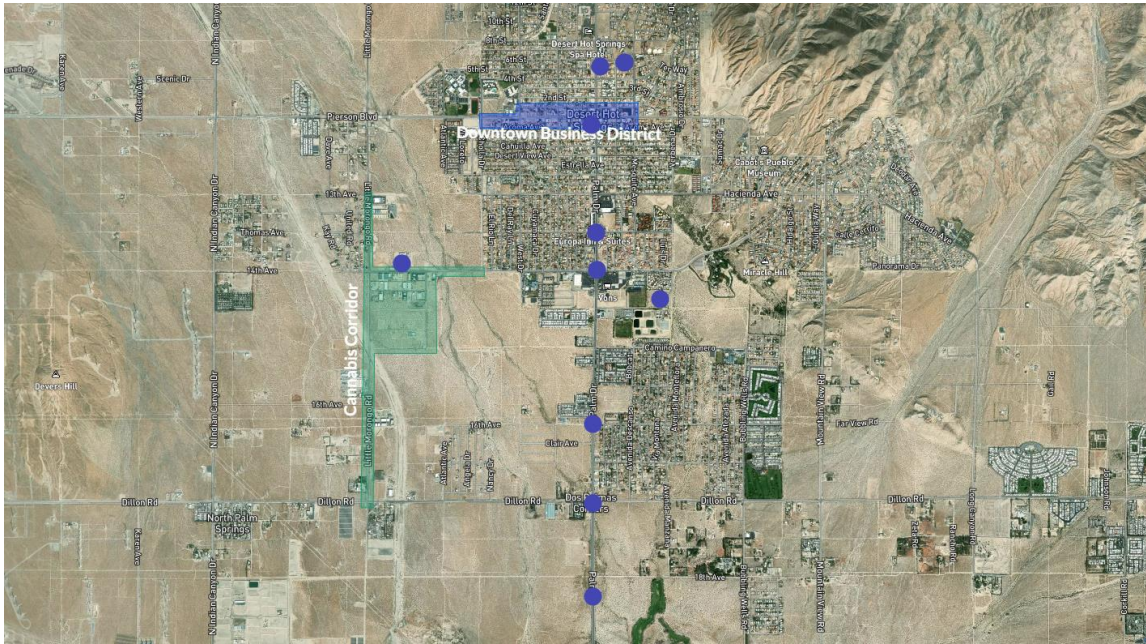
Survey respondents noted many areas that felt unsafe to cross the street, clustered north-south along Palm Drive, east-west along Two Bunch Palms Trail, and at some other intersections (Indian Canyon Drive and Mission Lakes Boulevard, Indian Canyon Drive and Pierson Boulevard, Little Morongo Road and Pierson Boulevard, and Hacienda Avenue and Mesquite Avenue).

Issue Identified: Lack of Sidewalks – Downtown



Survey respondents noted a lack of sidewalks in residential neighborhoods along Acoma Avenue in the Downtown Business District, as well as in some residential neighborhoods elsewhere in the city.

Issues Identified: Other Needs

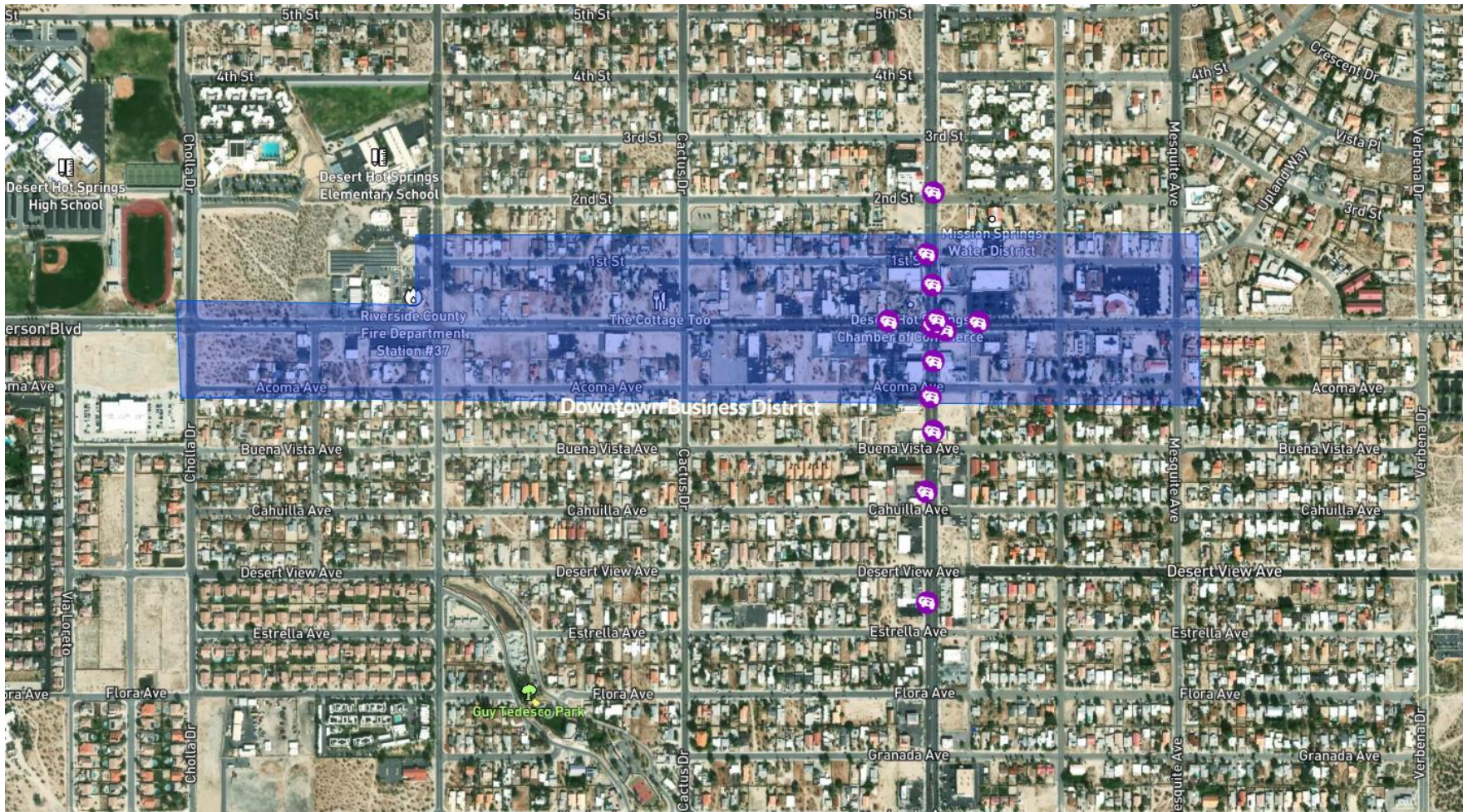


Survey respondents were able to place a pin on other points throughout the city and add a note if they would like to identify a specific issue. The responses to these points included:

- “Homeless encampment”
- “razed property”
- “fenced up hotel”
- “This company creates traffic on the street. Lines of cars East and west waiting to enter the facility.”
- “Owner locks parking lot without notice and impedes traffic from Pierson with a constant locked gate.”
- “Stop lights must be "smarter": During peak hours, there is A LOT OF TRAFFIC, since the stop lights only favor the drivers from the main streets (Palm Drive). If you drive from Ironwood Dr or Two Bunch Palms, for instance; you have to get up up to 30 minutes earlier to make it to work...” [This comment was added to four locations in the city.]
- “In here, DHS Gov. should open the yellow isle in the morning (6am to 9am at least) to the drivers who go to work/school and also in the afternoon/evening (5pm to 7pm, at least) to the ones who return from work. I have lived in big cities/suburban areas, and that is what they do to effectively address the traffic in peak hours.”

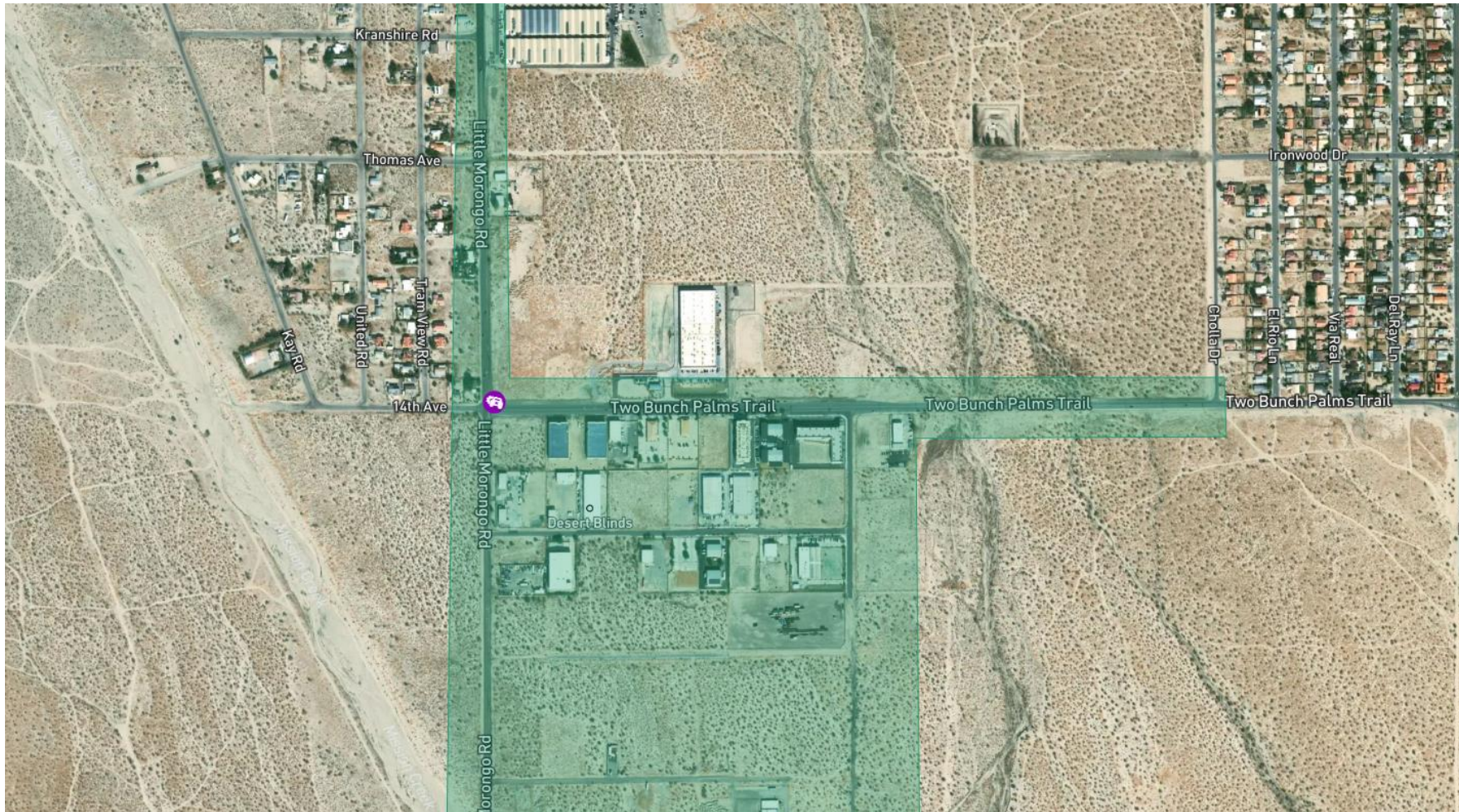
Improvements Suggested

Improvement Suggested: Reduce Traffic Speed – Downtown



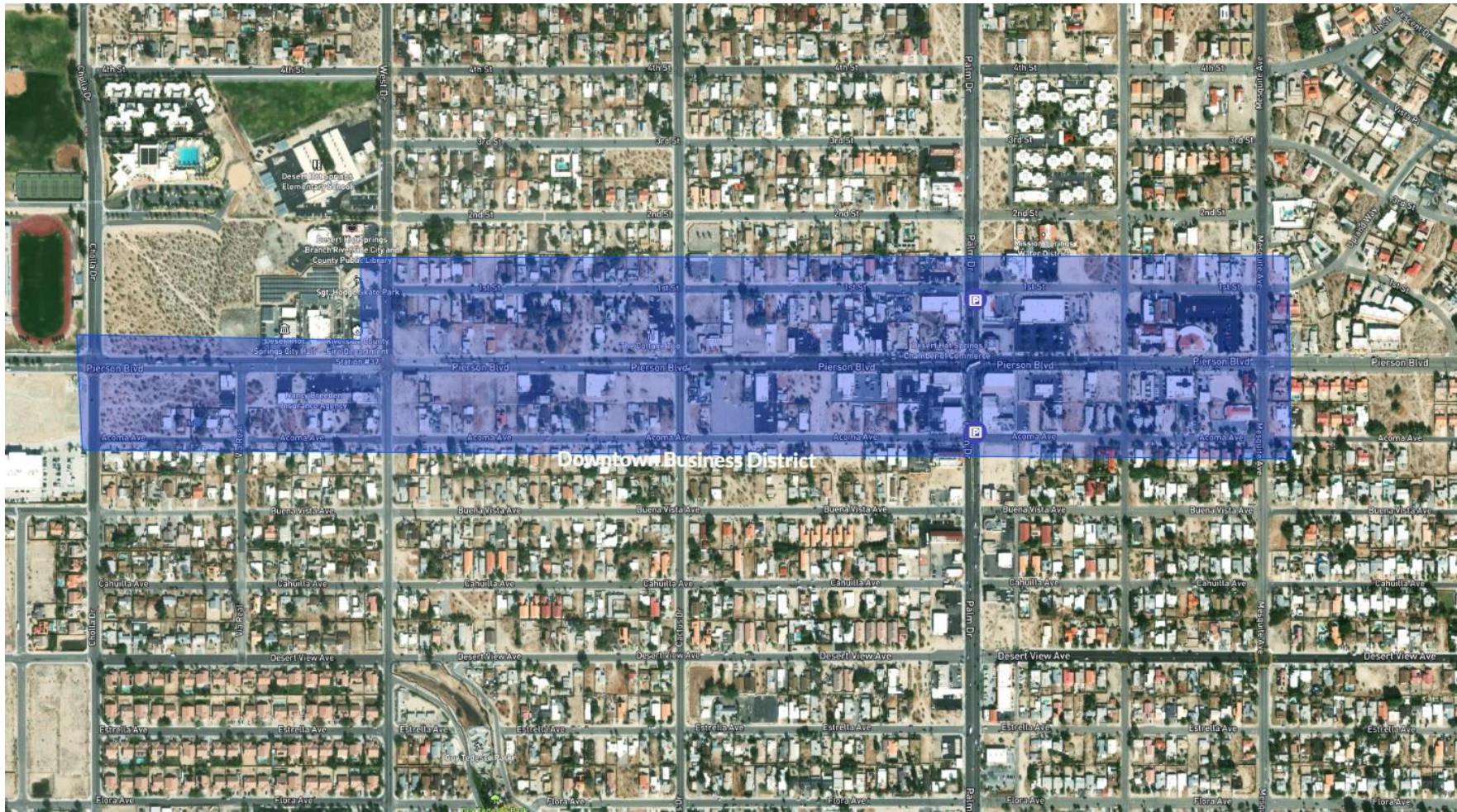
Survey respondents suggested reducing traffic speeds through the Downtown area, in particular north-south along Palm Drive.

Improvement Suggested: Reduce Traffic Speed – Industrial Cannabis Study Area



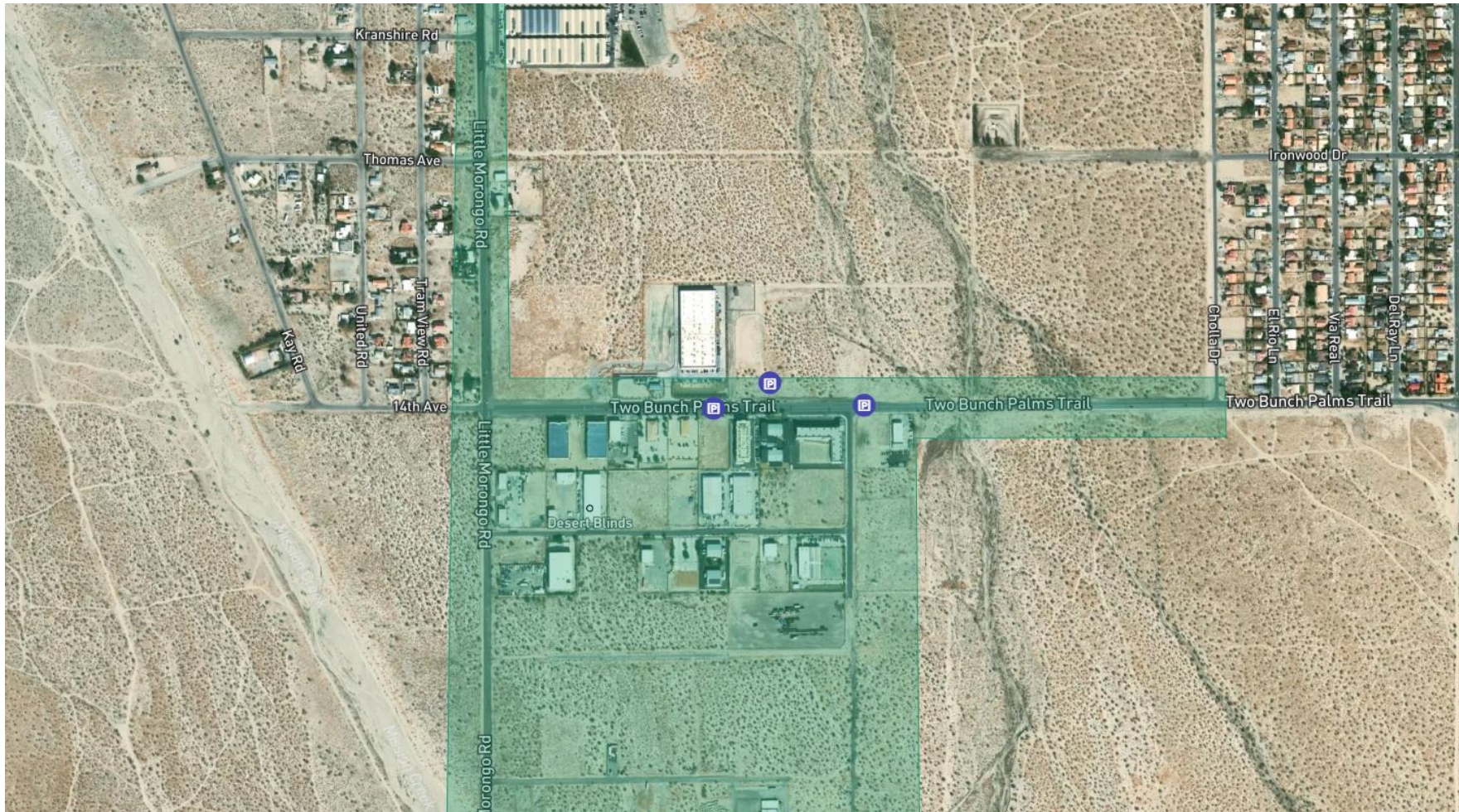
One survey respondent suggested reducing traffic speeds in the Industrial Cannabis Study area around the intersection of Little Morongo Road and Two Bunch Palms Trail.

Improvement Suggested: Add Crosswalk – Downtown



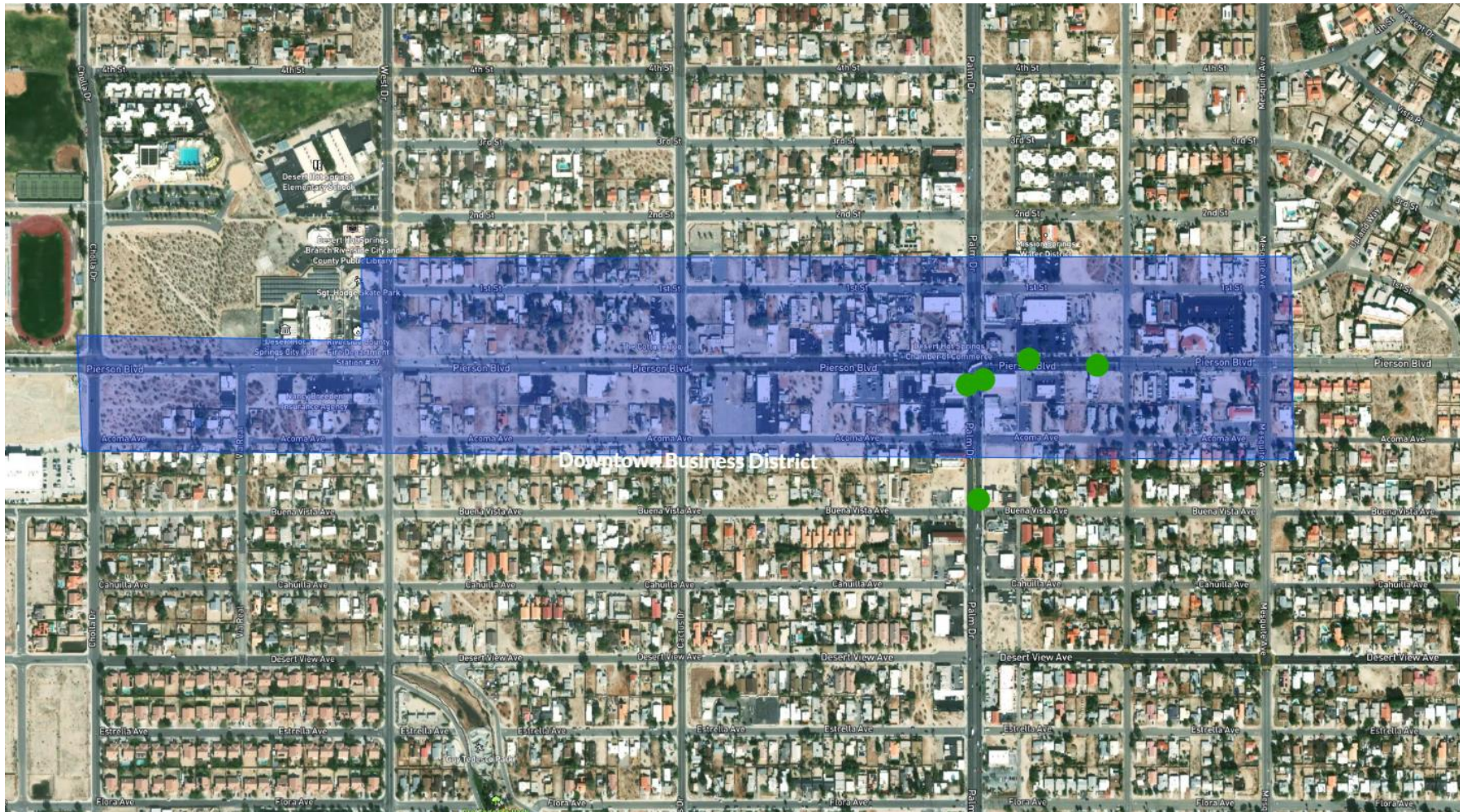
Survey respondents suggested adding a crosswalk where 1st Street and Acoma Avenue intersect Palm Drive.

Improvement Suggested: Add Crosswalk – Industrial Cannabis Study Area



Survey respondents suggested adding crosswalks adjacent to the major employers in the Cannabis Industrial Study Area.

Improvement Suggested: Add Protected Bike Lanes – Downtown



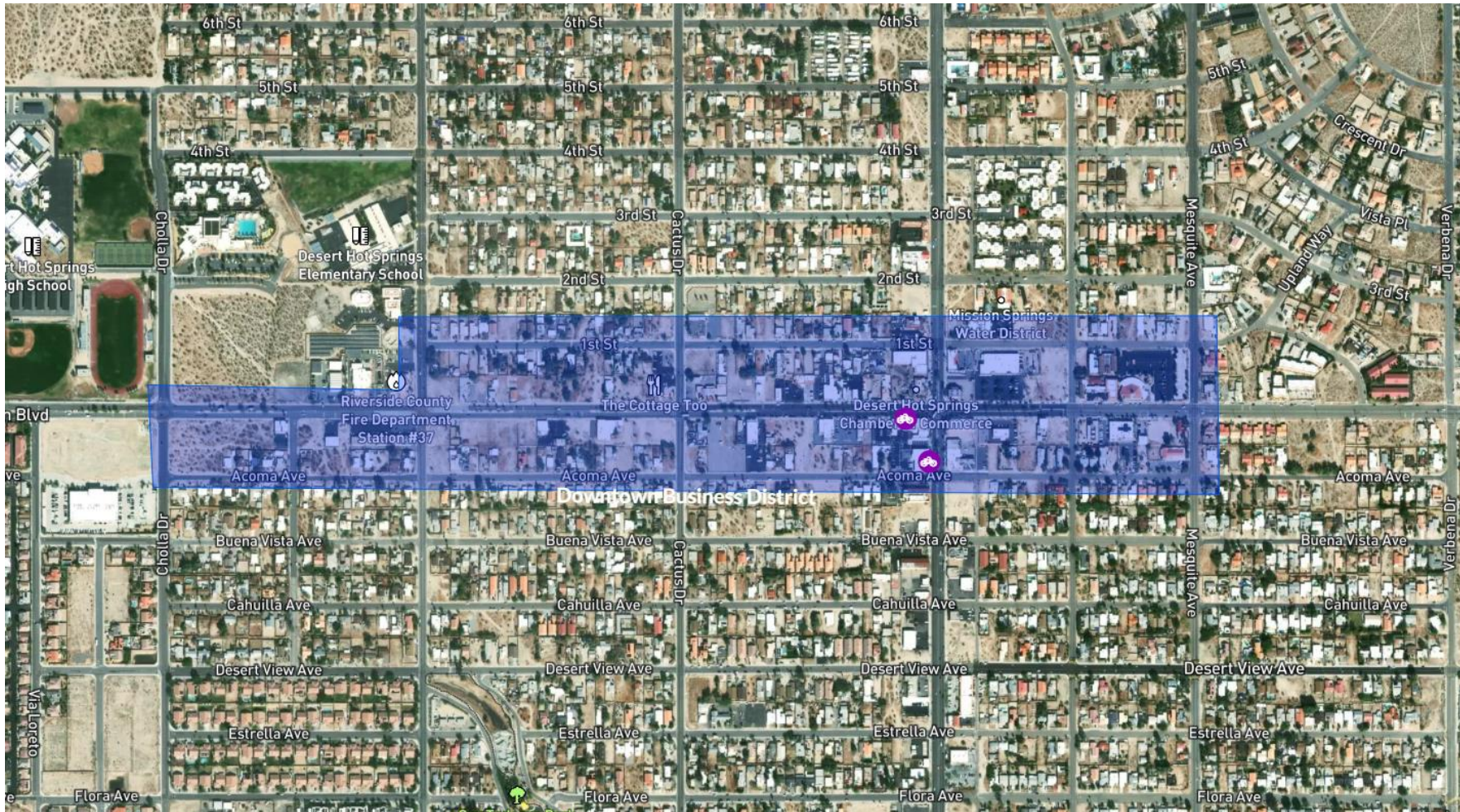
Survey respondents suggested adding protected bike lanes in proximity to the major downtown intersection at Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

Improvement Suggested: Add Protected Bike Lanes – Industrial Cannabis Study Area



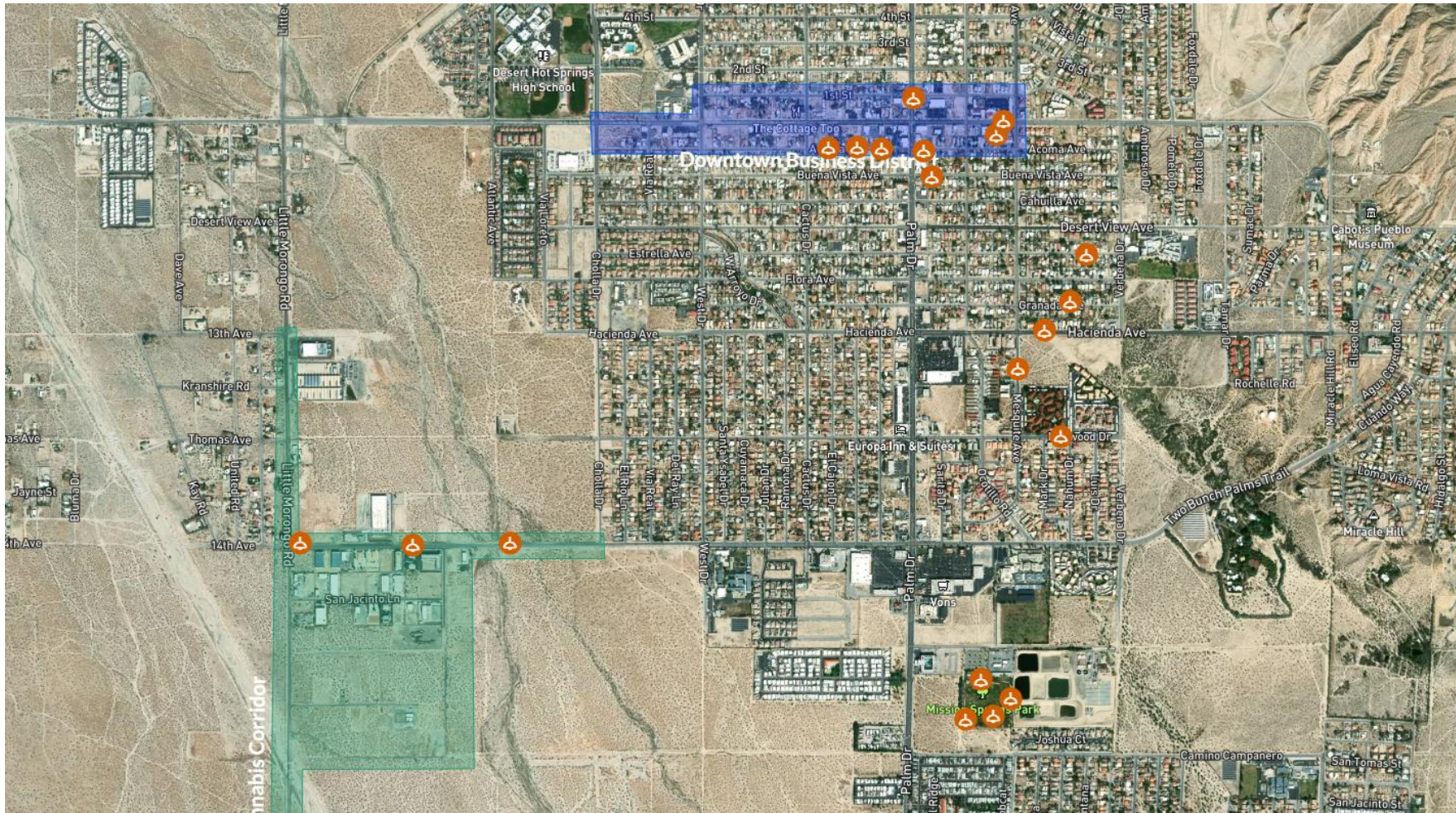
Survey respondents suggested adding protected bike lanes throughout the Industrial Cannabis Study area along Two Bunch Palms Drive and on Little Morongo Road.

Improvement Suggested: Add Bike Parking – Downtown



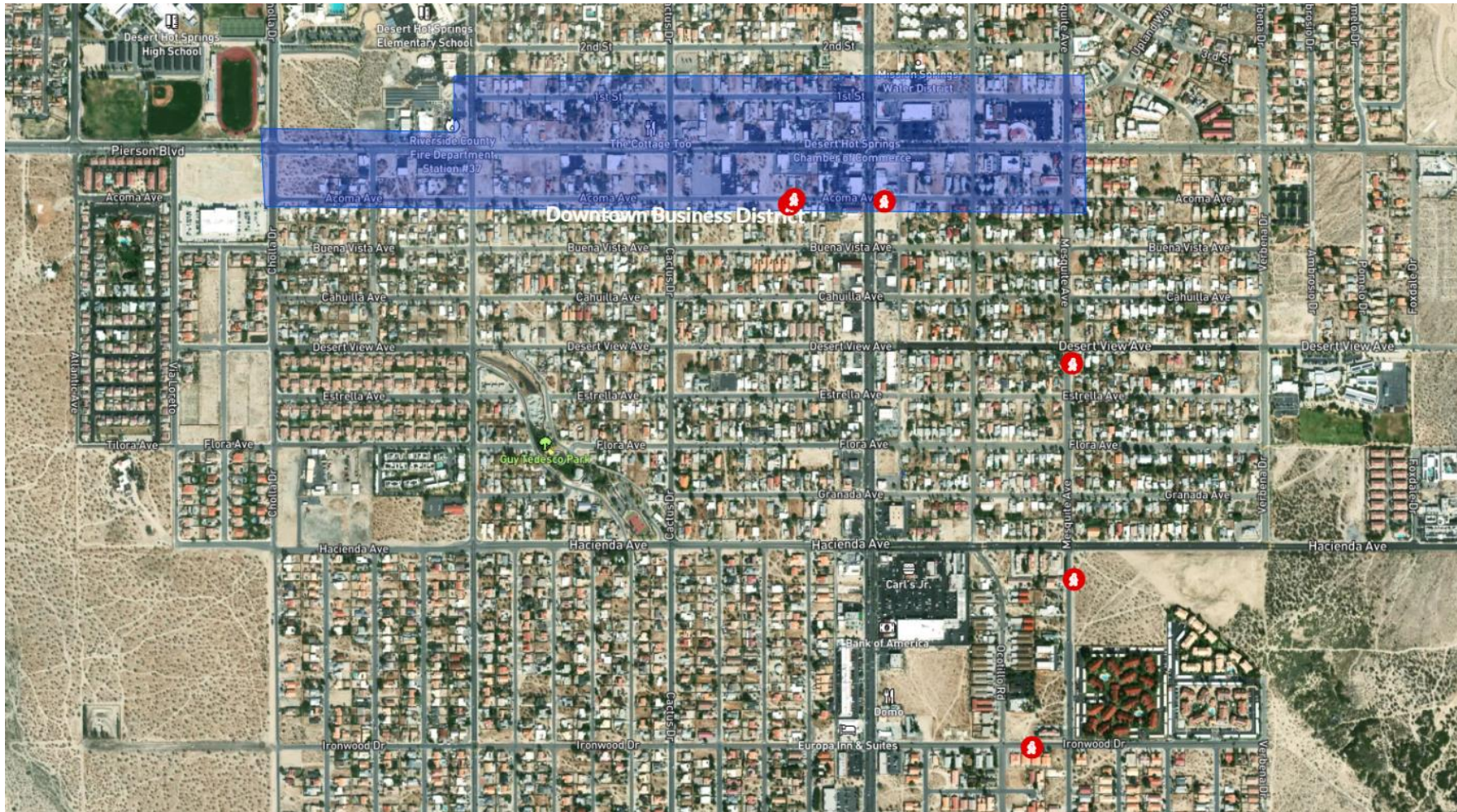
Survey respondents suggested adding bicycle parking locations adjacent to the major downtown intersection at Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

Improvement Suggested: Add Lighting – All Areas



Survey respondents suggested adding lighting near major employers and intersections in the Industrial Cannabis Study Area, in the residential neighborhoods of the Downtown Business District, at Mission Springs Park, and in some residential areas in the southeastern portion of the city.

Improvement Suggested: Add Sidewalk – Downtown



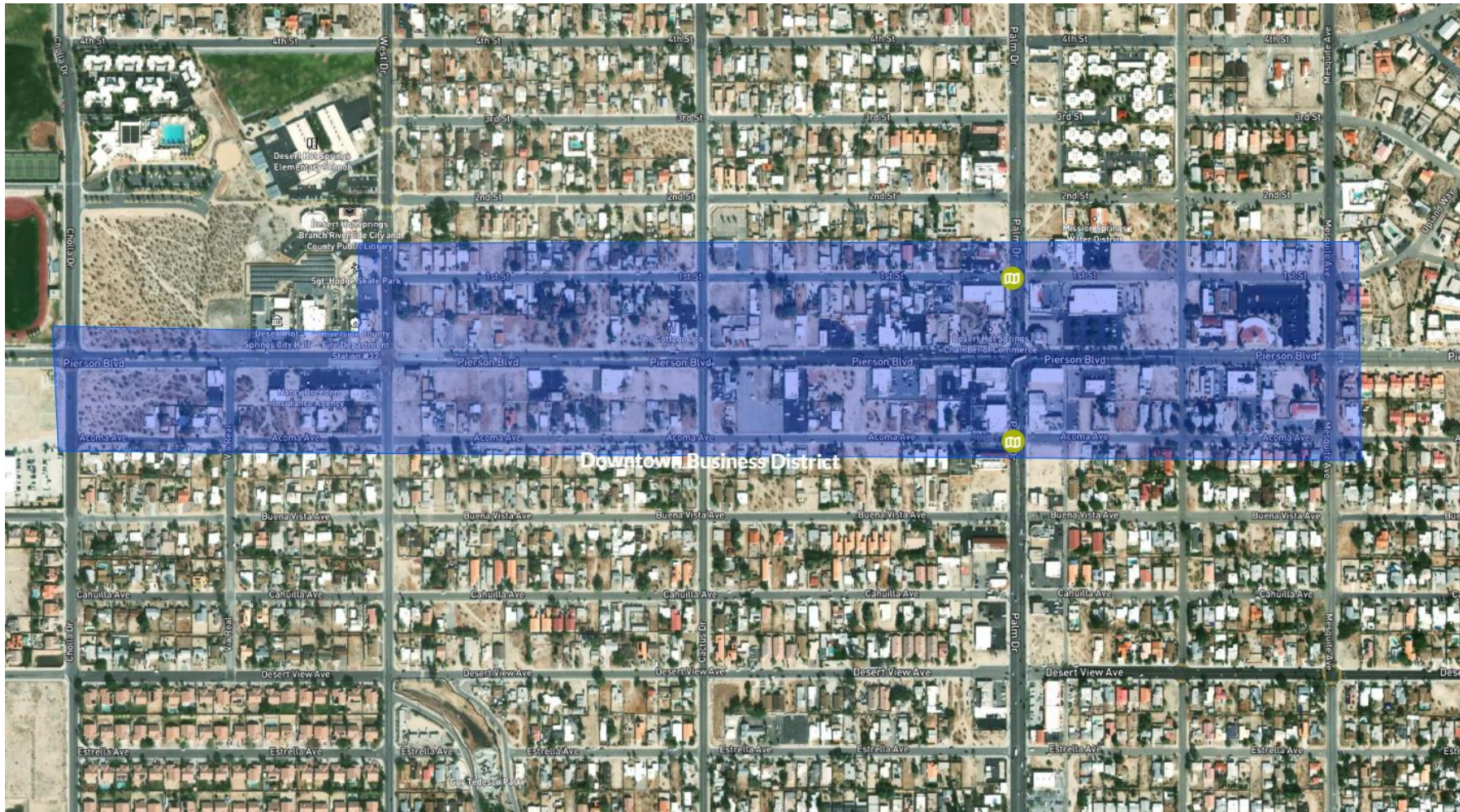
Survey respondents suggested adding sidewalks in the residential area along Acoma Avenue downtown, as well as in a few other residential areas to the southeast.

Improvement Suggested: Add Sidewalk – Industrial Cannabis Study Area



Survey respondents suggested adding sidewalks throughout the Industrial Cannabis Study area along Two Bunch Palms Drive and on Little Morongo Road.

Improvement Suggested: Add Signage/Wayfinding – All Areas



Survey respondents suggested adding signage or wayfinding on either side of the main intersection downtown at Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard.

Appendix D: Financial Considerations

Introduction

This appendix includes an inventory and evaluation of parking fee structures and revenues, cost considerations for the strategy recommendations included in this report, and a review of potential funding sources for consideration.

At its most basic parking funding consideration, the City currently has no parking fees or revenues. Based on our analysis of parking supply and demand, we do not see the implementation of paid parking as feasible, either as a revenue generator or policy strategy (parking management or transportation demand management), for the foreseeable future. A system of charging fees for parking would become applicable only if the demand for public parking were to increase significantly. This appendix briefly reviews various types of parking-related fees, and the circumstances under which they may or may not be appropriate for Desert Hot Springs. Although parking fees are not currently recommended and could not be expected to generate revenue, some of the parking and access strategies recommended—including acquiring an off-street lot for public parking, making street improvements, and improving access to alternatives to driving alone—would require funding sources for implementation. Potential funding sources for these strategies and financial considerations are also discussed.

We note that Walker is not a financial advisor and does not act in that capacity. To provide complete financial advice, an advisor in this role should have a complete picture of the City of Desert Hot Springs' finances, which is beyond the scope of services for this engagement. The financial guidance provided here is policy driven and based on the findings of this study and the recommendations provided in the report.

Current Fee Structure and Revenues

As outlined in the existing conditions chapter, the City of Desert Hot Springs currently has approximately 800 public on-street parking spaces in the downtown study area and approximately 1,873 existing and potential on-street parking spaces in the industrial cannabis area. Some of the potential parking spaces in the industrial cannabis area are on roads that are still undeveloped and unpaved or are on unpaved curb areas of existing roads. The two streets in the industrial cannabis study area where on-street parking was observed—Two Bunch Palms Trail and San Jacinto Lane—we project could reasonably accommodate a combined total of approximately 414 spaces. All public parking is on-street; the City does not have any public parking lots, with the possible exception of the City Hall parking facility, although it is assumed that the parking spaces serving public facilities are dedicated only to that purpose. To the extent the City shares these spaces, it effectively increases the public parking supply.

All public on-street parking in the City is currently free to motorists. There is no current parking fee structure or otherwise paid public parking, and no parking revenues. Current parking demand does not justify charging for parking. The cost to implement paid parking would likely exceed any revenues from paid parking that might be generated. Public spaces are a public asset. To the extent they are underutilized, and that charging for parking would tend to exacerbate that

underutilization, we do not recommend charging for parking. Further, no current demand would not generate parking revenue.

It is appropriate for existing on-street parking to remain free to motorists as long as the demand for this free parking is lower than the supply, which may be the case for many years. Although free parking is effectively a subsidy for driving, and although the City's General Plan prioritizes reducing vehicular trips and promoting multimodal transportation, the City may wish to continue providing free parking where public on-street parking has already been created, to promote access and activity in places where parking occupancy rates are not high enough to justify charging, either from a revenue generation or asset utilization perspective.

Given the low demand for parking observed in both downtown and the industrial cannabis study areas, *there is not currently any material revenue potential in charging for on-street parking.*⁶ General Plan Policy LU-3.10 states that the City should maximize revenue from the utilization of City-owned land and resources. Under the current circumstances, continuing to offer existing on-street parking free of charge to motorists may be the best use of this resource. When ample public parking is available, this reduces potential parking provision constraints on new development and can facilitate economic activity and property improvements, as property owners may choose to dedicate less of their land to private surface parking lots. Ultimately, a demand-based fee structure is recommended, which, based on current demand, means maintaining free on-street parking in both the downtown commercial district and industrial cannabis district.

Additionally, we note that even when paid parking is implemented, a paid parking program has associated costs, which may include paid parking and enforcement hardware, software, fees, administrative time, and operating costs of enforcement. Even in cases where parking revenue is generated, it may not generate revenue surplus.

Citation revenue from parking infractions may also generate revenue. However, we do not include these fees as a material source of revenue and do not recommend relying on them. The purpose of parking enforcement is to enhance the convenience, safety and quality of life of the community. A well-run parking enforcement operation is a system with full compliance and no citation revenue. It is not a best practice in parking management to rely on citation revenue for purposes other than to support the ongoing parking enforcement, to maintain compliance and thereby support the quality of life in the community.

Cost Considerations for Recommended Measures

Per the Scope of Services, in the following section, we provide a discussion of cost considerations associated with the recommendations contained in this report. These recommendations generally fall into three categories:

1. Recommendations that may require some city staff time to implement, but overall little additional cost to the city (no ongoing FTE costs); and
2. Recommendations that may require ongoing operational costs; and

⁶ If the city were to promote the use of on-street spaces by employees in the Industrial Cannabis District, in lieu of using on-site private parking spaces, it is possible that a small amount of revenue could be generated, although unlikely to exceed the cost of administering and enforcing an on-street parking program. It is unlikely that employees would be willing to pay for on-street parking in lieu of free on-site parking. The City would likely prefer to generate revenue from the revenue from cannabis production using on-site square footage rather than revenue from on-street parking, which would most certainly be less.

3. Recommendations that may require capital costs.

Below we discuss examples of each of these costs:

Providing shared or public parking. In the recommendations chapter, we noted that there is an excess of parking in Downtown Desert Hot Springs, however there could be an opportunity to consolidate parking into shared parking lots, thereby allowing for the development of more parcels into businesses or civic spaces. As has been talked about in the city, this type of civic space could host food trucks or the recently established Container Park in the City's downtown.

Construction and Acquisition of Surface Parking

Cities typically envision that providing public parking facilities will require the acquisition of land and construction of parking-related improvements. We noted that the construction costs to improve a parcel with surface parking is typically \$7,500± per space. We noted that the price for improved parcels along Pierson Boulevard as of the date of this report (July 31, 2023) appeared to be approximately \$500,000 for 0.15 acres.

Therefore, not including demolition of existing structures, the cost of providing thirty four spaces on 0.30 acres is projected at approximately one million in land costs plus \$255,000 in construction. A system of pedestrian pathways to connect surface lots to destinations in the area, separate from the existing sidewalk network, would represent an additional cost. Based on the number and location of the specific surface lots recommended (five lots) we project the total costs for the district of acquiring land and constructing surface parking ranging from approximately \$100,000 for lots of 0.15 acres and 13 spaces, to \$255,000 for 0.30 acres and 34 spaces per lot. Costs may vary considerably based on the conditions encountered.

Leasing Existing Parking or Parcels

As discussed in the recommendations, leasing existing parking or parcels can provide a more cost effective and flexible alternative to purchasing land and constructing parking in an area with abundant, available parking spaces.

In the recommendations chapter, we suggest that the City lease existing parking spaces to make them available to the driving public or a subset of that population (for example, to employees) so as to make the most convenient parking spaces available for customers and other visitors. The terms of these agreements vary, but should likely include the following:

- **A per-space monthly or annual fee to the property owner:** In Desert Hot Springs, we would expect a monthly fee from \$40 to \$75 per month per space.
- **Parking Enforcement:** All public parking, both on- and off-street, needs proper enforcement to ensure the availability of parking and provide clean and safe parking to the public. While the provision of off-street public parking on a small scale could be enforced by the police department, the full-scale implementation of the five off-street surface lot locations suggested in the recommendations chapter, as well as increased parking restrictions at the curb, could justify the addition of a 0.5 FTE staff member. When possible, Walker typically recommends that enforcement be performed with a customer service, ambassadorial style approach, and not necessarily by a law enforcement officer, which can also reduce costs.
- **Parking Lot Lease Program/Lot Purchase:**
 - **Cost to restore and maintain a surface lot:** Many of the surface lots we observed in Downtown Desert Hot Springs were in need of restoration, which we assume would take place prior to making

- them available to the public. We project these costs to range from \$1,000 to \$2,000. While just a fraction of the cost of maintaining parking structures, maintenance and cleaning costs for parking lots should be taken into account. Maintenance costs will vary based on the size of the lot, with more efficiency for a fewer number of total lots, which are larger. Smaller lots will increase costs on a per stall basis. Per stall costs could range substantially as a result, from \$15-65 per year. An annual janitorial service for a the 34-space lot that we assume could be accommodated on two downtown 0.15 acre parcels is likely around \$2,000, if not higher with labor scarcity. Maintaining landscaping could nearly double this cost. We would expect the parking lots discussed for downtown Desert Hot Springs to incur maintenance costs on the higher end of this range, given their small size and exposure to extreme heat. Maintenance costs for the surface lots serving city hall should provide a representative cost comparison.
- **Signage:** Signage is needed to communicate that a parking lot is available for public parking as well as any restrictions or limitations on the parking. We assume two to four signs at a cost of \$200 to \$250 each.
 - **Insurance:** Liability issues and insurance are often cited as an obstacle to private owners allowing public parking in their surface lots. While the issue can be overcome through a city assuming liability or covering the costs to insure a parking facility, we note that typically parking lots are insured for full usage in any case. We suggest that the city assume a cost of \$10 to \$14 per space per year to insure surface parking lots, either owned or leased.
- **Shade Structures:** In the recommendations chapter, shade structures were recommended as a way to facilitate the productive use of some of the underutilized right way for long term parking, so that private property owners could maximize the developable, productive area of their land, particularly in the industrial cannabis district. Improved on-street parking was also seen as a way to provide parking for cars waiting to enter cannabis production facilities during shift changes, to avoid waiting in the right of way. The shade structures were seen as a way potentially to minimize the exposure of cars parked at the curb to sun exposure, and to cover sidewalks, to facilitate the use of on-street parking longer walks from the curb to businesses.

Based on our experience with shade structures, we estimate the cost at \$200 per square foot to \$300 per square foot. This cost includes the shade structure, fabric, and installation, and we note that based on the experts we talk to, the shade structures can be expected to hold up in Desert Hot Springs' windy environment. Therefore, for approximately 800 linear feet along Two Bunch Palms, a distance that could encompass potentially 300 to 400 parking spaces, we project costs of approximately \$1.3 million to 2.0 million dollars, assuming a shade width of 8.2 feet. A significantly narrower shade structure may be acceptable. The cost per improved curb space is several thousand dollars, less than our projected surface lot cost of \$7,500 per space although still costly. However, the opportunity cost of the private land, and its ability to contribute to the city tax base, should be considered, as should the facilitation of cars that currently queue in the right of way during shift changes. Regarding the cost to build sidewalks, we note that some sidewalk infrastructure currently exists on Two Bunch Palms and additional infrastructure may be built out based on the city's bicycle and pedestrian plan and as new development occurs in the industrial cannabis district.

Shared Mobility Solutions: While they can be viewed as costly on a per ride basis, when compared to the significant cost of auto infrastructure and the cost to the driver for the vehicle, taxes, insurance, and fueling, transportation demand management (TDM) in general and short distance shared mobility specifically, can be an effective way to fulfill short trips for some members of the public in a cost effective and environmentally friendly way. Some points to note regarding shared mobility for Desert Hot Springs include the following:

- Scooter and bike share stations need some form of density to work. People will not walk far to stations or to find dockless bikes. However, we believe that destinations such as the cannabis industrial district, the Spa Zone, and the downtown, particularly at Pierson Boulevard and Two Bunch Palms, could be reasonable places to locate shared scooters, bicycles, or e-bikes.
- Most trips are short trips, and we find that the shared mobility companies are raising rates, so to ride for significant distances would become costly.
- In terms of costs, shared mobility companies may need a subsidy from the city. In addition to an RFP bid effort from \$20,000 to \$30,000, the city would need to expect on going costs and hold shared mobility providers to a contract to ensure significant service.
- Shared mobility is possible, even in suburban locations. We highlight a recent program in the San Gabriel Valley: <https://betterbikeshare.org/2022/11/04/reimagining-bike-share-for-the-suburbs/>

Review of Fees and Other Funding Sources

This section reviews various types of parking and transportation fees and funding sources and evaluates their appropriateness for Desert Hot Springs.

- **Paid Parking:** Paid parking involves charging an hourly or flat fee, from daily to monthly to annual rate for parking. Paid parking is most appropriate on streets with parking utilization above 85 percent, to allocate parking demand. Implementing paid parking in prime locations can ensure the most efficient use of a finite parking resource; discretionary or longer-term parkers park farther away, on streets or in off-street lots where there is no charge for parking, and walk to their destinations—ensuring convenient parking is available for customers and short-term visitors. Some may choose not to store their vehicles in the high demand areas or use an alternative to driving and parking. Free parking is a powerful incentive for driving, but the destination is the draw. With paid parking, some people will still travel to the destination but use other modes of transportation. To the extent paid parking deters someone from visiting a destination, the greater assurance of finding a space attracts others who otherwise would avoid coming to a district altogether.

When demand is sufficiently high, although revenue generation is not the primary goal, paid parking can be a valuable source of revenue for cities; maximizing the value of public assets, as previously noted, is called for in the City's General Plan. Revenue can be allocated to help local business and property owners by funding improvements in the areas where the parking revenue was generated (such as cleaning, security, free public wi-fi, active transportation infrastructure, street trees, landscaping, and the management or added capacity of the parking supply). Over the course of our study, no streets in Desert Hot Springs were observed to experience parking utilization near or above 85 percent, but if parking demand increases in

the future, paid parking, which can take various forms—including pay-by-phone (pay by text, app, or browser), parking meter multispace meter kiosks (limiting the cost and aesthetic impact of parking hardware) or single space meters—can be considered for implementation. An online pay by plate system could allow residents to either pay in advance through a billing or declining system or offer residents discounts or free parking while non-city residents are charged. A paid parking system can take the form of a combination of all these systems of charging for parking. We note that any kind of preferential parking tends to encourage driving and the associated traffic and lack of parking availability and constrains the revenue generation capability of a paid parking system.

Paid parking is *not currently recommended* for Desert Hot Springs, due to low parking utilization, representing underutilization of public assets and a lack of revenue generation opportunities.

- **Parking Assessment Districts:** A parking assessment district allows property owners within designated boundaries the ability to assess themselves through increased property taxes to collectively fund desired parking improvements. For example, if local business owners believe they would benefit from the construction of paid parking infrastructure or a parking facility, forming an assessment district could ensure every owner contributed, preventing “free riders” from benefiting from the improvements without contributing their fair share. In some cases assessments vary based on distance (and therefore opportunity to benefit from) from the funded parking infrastructure. In California, establishing a parking assessment district typically requires an approval vote from two-thirds of all property owners within the proposed district. Parking assessment districts can be appropriate for locations in which property owners can reach consensus on the need – and willingness to pay - for certain parking improvements to support their businesses.

Establishing a parking assessment district is not recommended for Desert Hot Springs. First, the benefits of building a shared parking facility typically accrue where parking can be shared, providing efficiencies to a variety of land uses in the district. In the Cannabis District, land uses were observed to generally experience the same peaks in parking demand, limiting the ability to share spaces. In the downtown, nearly every parcel currently was observed to have excess, onsite parking. Likely because of this, neither the downtown nor the industrial cannabis study area property owners have expressed any interest in parking infrastructure improvements. A parking assessment is an additional cost to doing business. Given the nascency of the downtown commercial district, a parking assessment on properties or businesses is likely premature and counterproductive to developing the area.

- **Parking In-lieu Fees:** Parking in-lieu fees rely on the existence of minimum parking requirements for new development projects and use changes; they allow a developer or business owner to opt out of providing any required parking on-site and instead contribute a set fee per stall not provided to a citywide fund. Parking in-lieu fees can help prevent scattered and unattractive private parking lots from being created and instead help downtowns become “park once and walk” areas. Some cities have used in-lieu fees to create public parking garages in central locations, facilitating the redevelopment of scattered surface parking lots and creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Cities have also used parking in-lieu fees to support access to transportation alternatives, including bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Collecting in-lieu fees to fund additional parking infrastructure could be appropriate if the lack of available and affordable parking was found to be preventing people from visiting an area. Allowing parking in-lieu fees and using the funds

to increase access to transportation alternatives may be more appropriate than having inflexible parking requirements, but cities interested in increasing access to sustainable transportation can also do so more directly through impact fees.

The paradox of parking in lieu fees is that fees set high enough to contribute meaningfully to funding transportation infrastructure or programs are likely too high for businesses' willingness to pay (after all, in lieu fees are optional, by definition). In lieu fees set sufficiently low to inspire businesses to pay the fees in lieu of providing their own private parking provide little meaningful funding. In lieu fees can, however, incentivize shared public parking in lieu of parcel after parcel of private parking, making parking more efficient, less impactful, and sustainable. However, as a revenue source, their impact tends to be minimal.

*Parking in-lieu fees are **not recommended** for Desert Hot Springs because they rely on minimum parking requirements, which the City is advised to remove citywide, in order to facilitate economic growth and development and progress toward numerous other policy goals established in the General Plan. Further, their benefit as a funding source tends to be minimal. Only if the City were not to eliminate minimum parking requirements should parking in lieu fees be considered.*

- **Impact Fees:** Developer impact fees generally involve establishing a per-unit fee for new residential developments and a square footage-based fee for retail, office, and industrial developments. Funds can be used for transportation facilities, including already-planned pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects throughout the City and transit service improvements. Establishing these fees requires a nexus study demonstrating the relationship between the expected transportation impacts of new developments and the cost of addressing those impacts through transportation improvements. As a result, typically a reasonable projection of the amount of new development that will be constructed within the defined district is needed to allocate the cost of new transportation infrastructure equitably, based on the amount of development impact.

As a member of the Coachella Valley of Association of Governments (CVAG), the City of Desert Hot Springs is currently a potential recipient of transportation impacts fees through Transportation Uniform Mitigations Fees (TUMF). However, a cursory review of the TUMF demonstrated a relatively small portion of the fee is dedicated to active transportation projects in Desert Hot Springs, and likely one that does not align with aspirational goals for a multimodal transportation system that offers robust alternatives to driving alone. The TUMF appears focused on adding new arterial capacity for automobile traffic.

The City of Santa Monica has a transportation impact fee of the type we envision would be beneficial for Desert Hot Springs. Santa Monica's Transportation Impact Fee program requires developers to pay a fee based on the number of residential units planned or on the amount of square footage for non-residential developments. The transportation impact fee revenues may fund sidewalk improvements, bike parking, transit improvements, and new striping (e.g., for bicycle and transit lanes). Programmatic measures may include partnerships with sustainable mobility service providers. While other cities may have transportation improvement fees that fund vehicle infrastructure, Santa Monica directs these funds toward projects that reduce vehicle traffic, which also helps manage parking demand.

Santa Monica requires Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans for new developments with 16 or more residential units or at least 7500 commercial square feet. Strategies to reduce vehicle travel may include both programmatic measures, such as providing employees or residents with transportation allowances for transit passes, and site improvements, such as providing secure bicycle parking with electric charging for e-bikes.

*To the extent that CVAG's TUMF is not sufficient to fund the driving alternatives necessary to achieve the City's goals, a transportation impact fee is **recommended** for Desert Hot Springs for the purpose of funding adequate infrastructure to support sustainable or active modes of travel, and new development increases the need for transportation improvements. The fees should be established at relatively low levels to avoid creating an excessive constraint on development. Transportation impact fees can be seen as an alternative to or replacement for minimum parking requirements, as the fees are less restrictive in their use and more aligned with the General Plan goals. Creating and maintaining parking is both more costly and less necessary in Desert Hot Springs than increasing access and safety for people walking, biking, or using shared mobility.*

- **Parking Revenue Bonds:** Parking revenue bonds allow cities to go into debt to fund new parking infrastructure and use only parking revenues to pay the debt service. Cities cannot be required to use general funds or levy taxes to pay revenue bond interest and principal. Typically, the debt incurred by funding parking using these revenue bonds does not impact a city's credit. Because they are not paid off with taxpayer funds, these revenue bonds may not require voter approval to be issued. However, because they are not backed by the general fund, they are also seen as riskier for investors and in nearly all cases will have higher interest rates than general obligation bonds. Further, a city planning to follow the best practice of returning at least half of any parking revenue generated to the community would result in a smaller revenue stream and increase the difficulty of securing bond financing.

*Parking revenue bonds are **not currently recommended** for Desert Hot Springs because parking infrastructure could not be expected to pay for itself through parking revenues. As noted, we do not see a viable source of public parking revenue in the city.*

- **General Obligation Bonds:** General obligation bonds allow cities to go into debt to fund public-serving capital projects. This could include parking infrastructure, but also infrastructure that supports active transportation and shared mobility. Clean Transportation projects are one of the project categories eligible for the issuance of a Green Bond according to the Green Bond Principles, created by an international group of finance institutions. The Green Bond label that may be seen as a bonus feature, especially for investors who prescribe to environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals for investing. Unlike revenue bonds, under general obligation bonds, including green general obligation bonds, cities can be required to use general funds or levy taxes to pay revenue bond interest and principal, typically relying on taxpayer funds, and therefore requiring two-thirds voter approval.

*General obligation bonds are **not currently recommended** for Desert Hot Springs for the purpose of funding parking infrastructure because the benefits of additional parking infrastructure, would not outweigh the costs, which tend to be substantial. Structured parking results in costs of hundreds of dollars per space per month. Meanwhile, the City currently has ample parking availability.*

*Green general obligation bonds **may be worth further exploring** for the purpose of funding sustainable transportation infrastructure. The community has expressed a desire for improvements that would increase the ease and safety of walking, biking, and shared mobility, but it is unknown whether community members would support the City taking on additional public debt for sustainable transportation projects.*

- **Grants:** In our experience, grant funding specifically to support parking infrastructure is extremely rare. Federal, state, and regionally administered grants are unlikely to fund parking infrastructure. However, many grants support active transportation and shared mobility project implementation and new planning efforts, which reduce parking demand by making sustainable transportation more accessible and attractive. City staff should periodically monitor grant opportunities for which the City may be eligible to apply. Grant programs worth exploring include, but are not limited to:
 - Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, administered by the EPA
 - Safe Roads and Streets for All Grants, administered by the U.S. DOT
 - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, administered by the FHWA
 - Sustainable Communities Grants, administered by CalTrans
 - Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program Grants, administered by California’s Strategic Growth Council and Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Urban Greening, administered by the California Natural Resources Agency
 - Transformative Climate Communities Grants, administered by the Strategic Growth Council and Department of Conservation
 - Office of Traffic Safety Grant Programs, administered by the California Office of Traffic Safety
 - Clean Mobility Options Program, administered by the California Air Resources Board
 - Sustainable Transportation Equity Project, administered by the California Air Resources Board
 - Local Partnership Program, administered by the California Transportation Commission
 - Local Streets and Roads Program, administered by the California Transportation Commission
 - Highway Safety Improvement Program, administered by Caltrans Local Assistance/FHWA

*Seeking grant funding to implement sustainable transportation projects and fund future planning efforts is **recommended**. Many competitive grant programs prioritize disadvantaged communities and consider factors such as the average share of household income spent on transportation when allocating awards. The average share of household income spent on transportation within the three Census Tracts covered by the study areas ranges from approximately 27 to 29 percent. Obtaining grant funding can help the City more quickly support the implementation of already-planned bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure capital improvement projects that may help community members reduce their transportation spending. Grant funding may also be available for planning efforts, including conducting a study to implement a Sustainable Mobility Impact Fee, to create a TDM plan and ordinance with updated development standards, and to create a plan for secure bicycle and scooter parking and charging. All of these planning efforts complement parking management by reducing demand for vehicle parking.*

- **Enhanced Industrial Finance Districts (EIFDs) and Community Revitalization and Investment Authorities (CRIAs):** The EIFD financing mechanism was established in 2014 to provide a funding mechanism for potential infrastructure financing in light of the 2011 dissolution of California redevelopment agencies. CRIAs were established a year later as another type of tax increment financing district that increases

funding for and production of affordable housing in disadvantaged communities. It may fund other types of infrastructure projects as well.

The City of West Sacramento was the first in California to establish an EIFD and has since used this mechanism to plan the funding of several public parking facilities in districts throughout the city.

EIFDs and CRIAs tend to be feasible only for a small number of cities that have a larger share of property tax revenues and significant new development in the proposed districts, such as West Sacramento. Unfortunately, many cities have lost their internal capacity to pursue an EIFD or CRIA due to limited personnel and budget constraints. The process to form an EIFD or CRIA may be challenging if a full CEQA review or if voter approval to form the district or issue bonds is required. EIFDs can finance public infrastructure projects, as well as private childcare centers, affordable housing, and parking facilities.

Specific Funding Sources for Consideration

Due to current policy priorities in California and the nation, funding availability for the policies recommended in the report is tied most closely to two strategic goals, (1) housing production and (2) incentivization of multimodal transportation, particularly active transportation. The following funding sources—the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program and the Infill Infrastructure Grant Program—appear to be potentially relevant and promising.

California’s **Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program** is funded by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which receives cap-and-trade auction proceeds. The AHSC Program is intended to help lower GHG emissions by funding projects that reduce automobile trips or vehicle miles traveled. When a City applies for an AHSC grant, an affordable housing development corporation should generally be a co-applicant. Depending on the request, there may be other co-applicants as well, such as SunLine Transit, the Riverside County Transportation Commission, the local school district, or a program operator. At least 50 percent of the requested funds should be dedicated to affordable housing development or housing related infrastructure, and the remaining award amount may be used for sustainable transportation infrastructure, transportation related amenities, or program costs.

Three project area types are eligible:

1. **Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Project Areas.** This project area type requires proximity to “High Quality Transit” with service frequency of 15 minutes or less, so it is not applicable to DHS projects.
2. **Integrated Connectivity Project (ICP) Project Areas.** This project area type requires an affordable housing development near qualifying transit. This includes flexible transit service, so DHS projects within the SunRide service area may be eligible.
3. **Rural Innovation Project Areas (RIPA).** This project area type applies to Census tracts designated as being within a Rural Area (generally meaning a tract with population below 5,000, in a city with a population below 40,000). Two study area tracts in Desert Hot Springs may be eligible: Tract 445.09 in the downtown study area (north of Pierson Boulevard and west of Palm Drive) and Tract 445.07 in the industrial cannabis study area (south of Two Bunch Palms Trail and east of Little Morongo).

Examples of Sustainable Transportation Infrastructure, Transportation Related Amenities, or Program Costs funding uses include:

- Infrastructure:
 - Walkways, protected bikeways, pedestrian crossings, streetscape lighting/signage, traffic calming, parklets
 - Bike parking or bike repair kiosks
- Bike and car share:
 - Bike share infrastructure and fleet, program operations
 - ZEV car share vehicles with reduced costs for low-income participants, program operations
- Transit:
 - Transit vehicles, charging infrastructure, equipment, passenger amenities, real-time information displays, bus shelters
 - Vanpool vans and electric shuttles in rural areas
- Programs:
 - Education, transit subsidy programs and marketing, TDM programs, workforce development partnerships

All these examples could be applied to varying degrees to facilitate connections from parking to destinations in the downtown and cannabis districts. They could also be used to facilitate travel to and from the districts.

The **Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) Program** is administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. The IIG Program is meant to promote infill housing development by providing gap funding for infrastructure improvements that facilitate affordable or mixed-use housing development projects.

Funding may be used for ancillary development costs associated with a housing development, including:

- The creation, development, or rehabilitation of Parks or Open Space
- Streets, roads, or transit linkages or facilities
- Facilities that support pedestrian or bicycle transit
- Traffic mitigation
- Sidewalk or streetscape improvements

A city or other entity with jurisdiction over a “Catalytic Qualifying Infill Area” is eligible to apply. Applicants must have affordable housing development experience and demonstrate the capacity to acquire, develop, own, and maintain affordable housing. In the most recent round of funding, all small jurisdiction applicants were housing development corporations. To be eligible, projects must:

- Be located on previously developed or vacant site where at least 50 percent of the perimeter adjoins developed parcels
- Contain sites included in the housing element
- Be located in a mixed-use or residential area
- Be located within an Urbanized Area
- Show at least 100 housing units will be developed
- Include at least 15 percent Affordable units

The total grant amount is influenced by the number of proposed housing units, the depth of affordability, housing densities, access to transit, access to amenities, the presence of an adaptive reuse ordinance, and other scoring factors.

A grant application for the Desert Hot Springs Active Transportation Safety and Connectivity Plan was submitted by the City in March 2023 to the **California Department of Transportation's Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program**. The Plan focuses on the City's Focused Active Transportation Study Corridors, including three corridors within our study areas, (1) Two Bunch Trail through the industrial cannabis district, (2) Pierson Boulevard, and (3) Palm Drive in the City's downtown. If awarded, the grant therefore offers an opportunity to improve access and mitigate parking demand in a way that is consistent with SCAG's Smart Cities and Mobility Innovations projects and this report's recommendations.