



City of La Quinta

CITY / SA / HA / FA MEETING DATE: October 21, 2014

ITEM TITLE: DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE LA QUINTA VILLAGE

AGENDA CATEGORY:

BUSINESS SESSION:

CONSENT CALENDAR:

STUDY SESSION: 1

PUBLIC HEARING:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discuss planning and environmental studies for the La Quinta Village and provide direction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The City owns multiple Village properties. Interest in developing these and other vacant Village properties is growing.
- In August 2014, staff outlined a proposal to better position the Village for development. The proposal entailed having the City conduct traffic, parking, land use and environmental studies that would be the basis for development entitlements. Property owners and developers would then only be required to obtain property-specific site development permits.
- This effort would also entail discarding development regulations that stifle creativity, add unnecessary processes and require lengthy City review.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The estimated cost to conduct the planning and environmental effort is \$180,000 to \$210,000. In addition, these activities may identify capital improvement needs that are not part of the Capital Improvement Program. If the Council elected to initiate the planning and environmental activities, a funding strategy would be presented in the Mid-Year Budget. Capital Improvement funding options would be outlined in future Capital Improvement Budgets.

BACKGROUND:

The La Quinta Village has been a unique “gem” since being established in the 1930’s. Development has been random and sporadic over the years with the most notable activity occurring during the last 20 years, particularly with Old Town, Embassy Suites and the Civic Center Campus.

Still today, more than 80 years later, vacant properties remain. The City purchased multiple Village properties in 2012 to consolidate small parcels and to stimulate development. Approximately 22 acres of Village properties are currently vacant; the City owns approximately 41 percent or nine acres of this vacant property.

The improving national and state economies are spurring development interest. Developers have contacted staff regarding the City properties, and various Village property owners have also expressed interest in developing their holdings. The General Plan outlines multi-story, mixed residential and retail development for a majority of the vacant Village properties. However, with the Coachella Valley and the Village being a relatively new market, demand for a mixed-use environment is unknown. Similar to the Highway 111 corridor in the late 1990’s, the initial new development in the Village is challenged to afford the cost to construct building and site improvements as well as the expense of off-site improvements.

During the August 5, 2014 City Council Study Session, discussion occurred regarding the proposed Villas at Old Town project and development matters associated with the Village in general. Topics relevant to the Village included enhancing pedestrian connectivity, improving circulation and parking, and simplifying the City development review process.

PLANNING/ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES:

The following entail the planning and environmental activities staff offers for Council consideration. Staff anticipates that once this effort is underway, additional items will surface that should be discarded, modified or enhanced.

Traffic/Circulation

Future Village development provides an opportunity to establish a pedestrian-oriented community wherein purveyors of goods and services are close to residents. The City’s Trends Forecast as well as planning periodicals show that the next generation is seeking mixed use residential opportunities in a pedestrian-oriented environment. Such an environment is also growing in popularity with recent retirees due to their preference for an active and healthy lifestyle.

Defining and establishing pedestrian routes linking destination points would involve two key pathways, which would serve as the “pedestrian arteries” of the Village; an east-west route linking Francis Hack Park with Old Town and the Civic Center Campus, and a north-south route linking Embassy Suites to Old Town and Fritz-

Burns Park (Attachment 2). Further definition and design of these routes is necessary.

Four main streets are key to circulation in the Village; Eisenhower Drive, Avenida Bermudas, Desert Club Drive and Calle Tampico. These streets not only serve as key routes to and through the Village but also provide general circulation for neighboring areas. Unlike many streets in the City, overall traffic volumes have not substantially increased over the past decade. However, average speeds have increased on Calle Tampico with the most recent speed survey presenting an average speed of 48 miles per hour in a posted 40 speed zone. In an effort to reduce speeds, strengthen the pedestrian scale and connect the properties north and south of Calle Tampico, design improvements are needed (especially between Avenida Bermudas and Desert Club Drive). Such improvements could include on-street parking, mid-block pedestrian crossings, curb extensions at intersections and mid-block crossings, narrower travel lanes, and/or speed tables. Intersection improvements at Eisenhower Drive and Calle Montezuma would also be beneficial for both vehicular and pedestrian flow. The cost for preliminary concept design is estimated at \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Parking

Parking demand and needs in the Village differ from the Highway 111 retail corridor and other retail areas in the City. However, City parking standards are the same for all retail district. Further, there are a variety of parking requirements that could be consolidated into as few as three categories; residential, commercial/office and restaurant.

One existing standard unique to the Village is the fee in-lieu parking program. This provision allows for a per stall payment to be made to the City instead of having to provide required off-street parking. A few developments have elected to utilize this provision over the past few years. This program should be reviewed to ensure that in-lieu payments have a direct nexus to future Village public parking improvements.

A higher demand for public parking will likely result as the Village develops. Consideration should be given to defining additional locations for future public parking as well as the option of constructing a parking structure on the City's existing public parking lot. The cost for addressing parking standards, updating the parking in-lieu program and identifying development of future public parking is estimated to be \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Village Land Uses and Development Standards

The Village currently permits a broad and diverse list of land uses. The permitted land uses should be reviewed to ensure that they promote and encourage a pedestrian scale village and mixed-use environment. Further, the concept of outlining what the City would not accept versus outlining all the uses the City would allow should be explored. The thought is to identify what is not acceptable and then let property owners decide the rest. Additionally, current development standards should be reviewed with the goal of discarding regulations that stifle

creativity, add unnecessary processes and require lengthy City review. The cost to undertake this task is estimated to be \$5,000.

Environmental Review

The size of the Village and remaining development potential provide opportunity for consideration of conducting a project level Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This effort would require conducting a build out analysis for vacant and significantly underdeveloped Village properties. The EIR would cover traffic, hydrology, cultural resources, noise, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions and would include a water supply assessment.

The EIR would ensure California Environmental Quality Act compliance for all future Village development so long as the development is consistent with the build out analysis. This compliance would provide financial and time benefits to future development projects. The cost to complete a project EIR is estimated to be \$150,000 to \$170,000.

Resources

The aforementioned cost estimates provided for these activities represent use of consultant resources with Community Development or Public Works staff facilitating the efforts. Use of City staff is expected to vary by activity. As represented, activities such as reviewing parking standards and analysis of Village land use and development standards would rely heavily upon City staff while conducting an EIR would mainly utilize consultant resources to complete.

ALTERNATIVES:

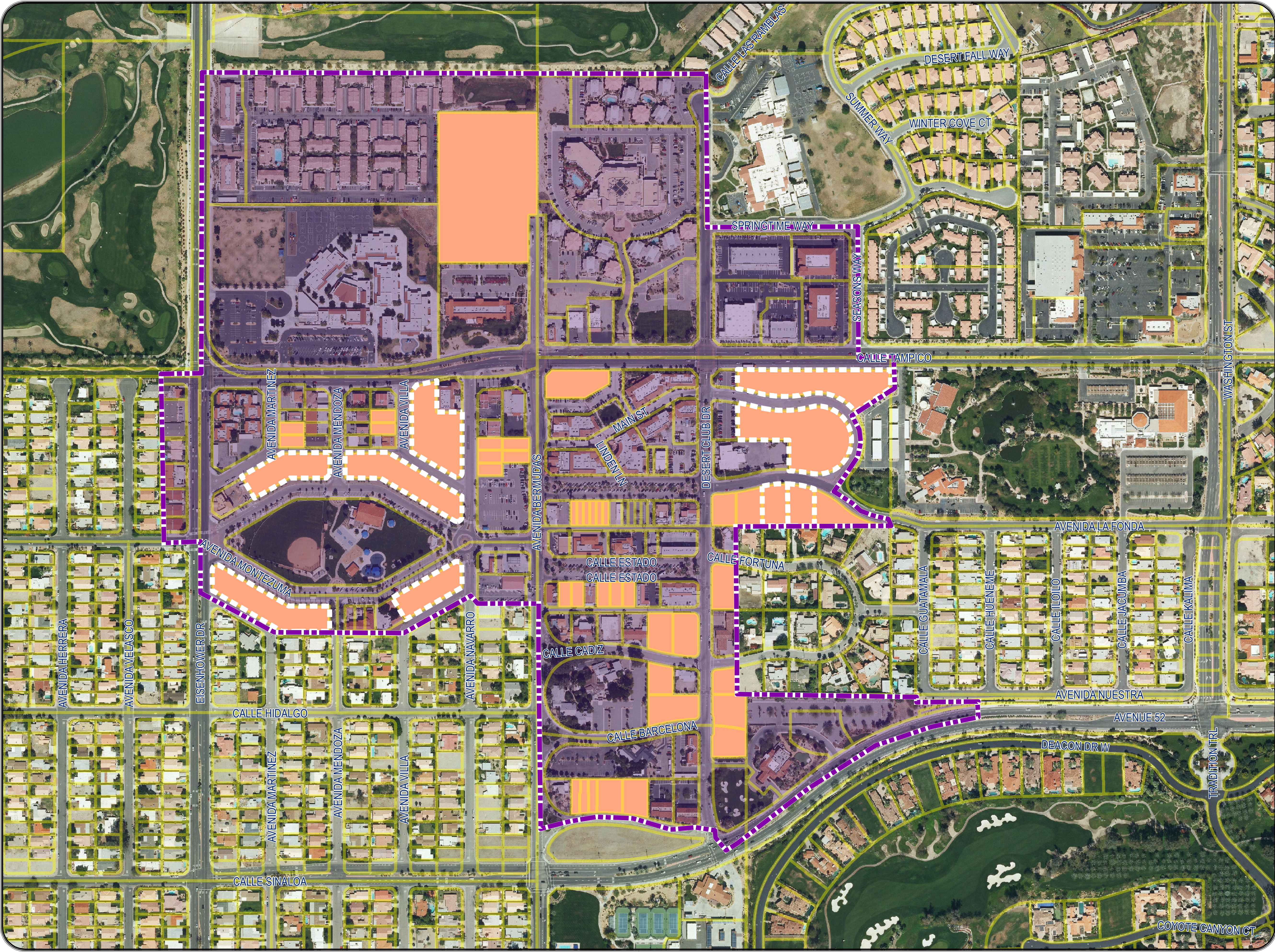
The City Council could elect to conduct just some of the aforementioned activities or elect to not proceed at all.

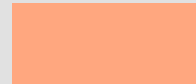


Report prepared by: Les Johnson, Community Development Director
Report approved for submission by: Frank J. Spevacek, City Manager

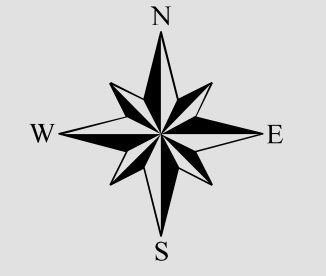
Attachments: 1. Village vacant properties map
 2. Circulation exhibit

Village Development
ATTACHMENT 1

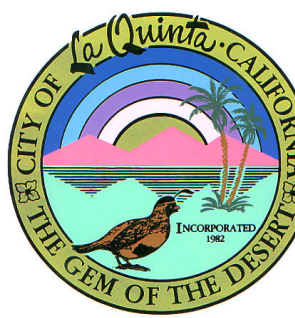
ATTACHMENT 1



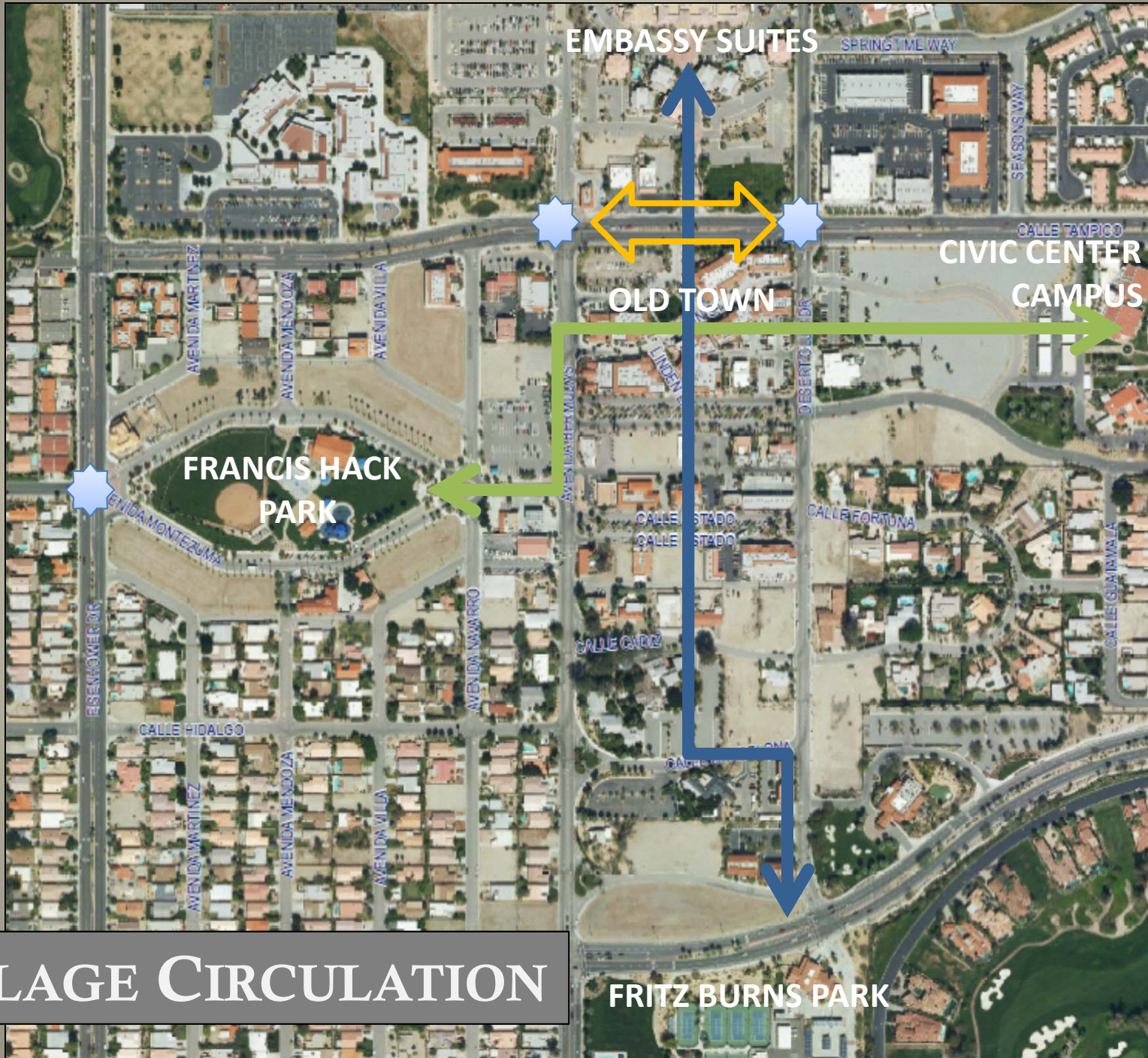
-  Vacant Properties
-  City-owned Properties
-  Village Zoning District



October 14, 2014



City of La Quinta
 Planning Division
 Community Development Department



VILLAGE CIRCULATION

