

# NOTICE OF PREPARATION

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To: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Agency)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report**

**Lead Agency:**

Agency: City of La Quinta Planning Department  
Street Address: P.O. Box 1504  
City/State/Zip: La Quinta, California 92247  
Contact: Wallace H. Nesbit, Principal Planner

**Consulting Firm** (if applicable):

Firm Name: Impact Sciences, Inc.  
Street Address: 234 East Colorado Boulevard, Suite 205  
City/State/Zip: Pasadena, California 91101  
Contact: Ali H. Mir, Project Manager

The City of La Quinta Planning Department will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the La Quinta Resort Specific Plan Amendment No. 6 project. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study ( is  is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Wallace H. Nesbit at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your **agency**.

**Project Title:** La Quinta Resort Specific Plan Amendment No. 6

**Project Location:** City of La Quinta Riverside  
City (nearest) County

**Project Description** (brief): The project would amend the adopted La Quinta Resort Specific Plan to allow development of new resort facilities in Planning Area 1 as defined in the Specific Plan. The proposed project would involve the redevelopment of approximately 26 acres in this Planning Area. Thirty-one structures containing 180 resort guest units and 46,500 square feet of related commercial and ancillary support space to the hotel would be demolished. New development would include approximately 852 hotel units and 109,500 square feet of commercial and ancillary support space related to the hotel.

Date: January 6, 2009

Signature: 

Title: Principal Planner

Telephone: (760) 777-7125

# LA QUINTA RESORT SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 6

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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### LEAD AGENCY

City of La Quinta Planning Department  
P.O. Box 1504  
La Quinta, California 92247

### LOCATION OF PROJECT

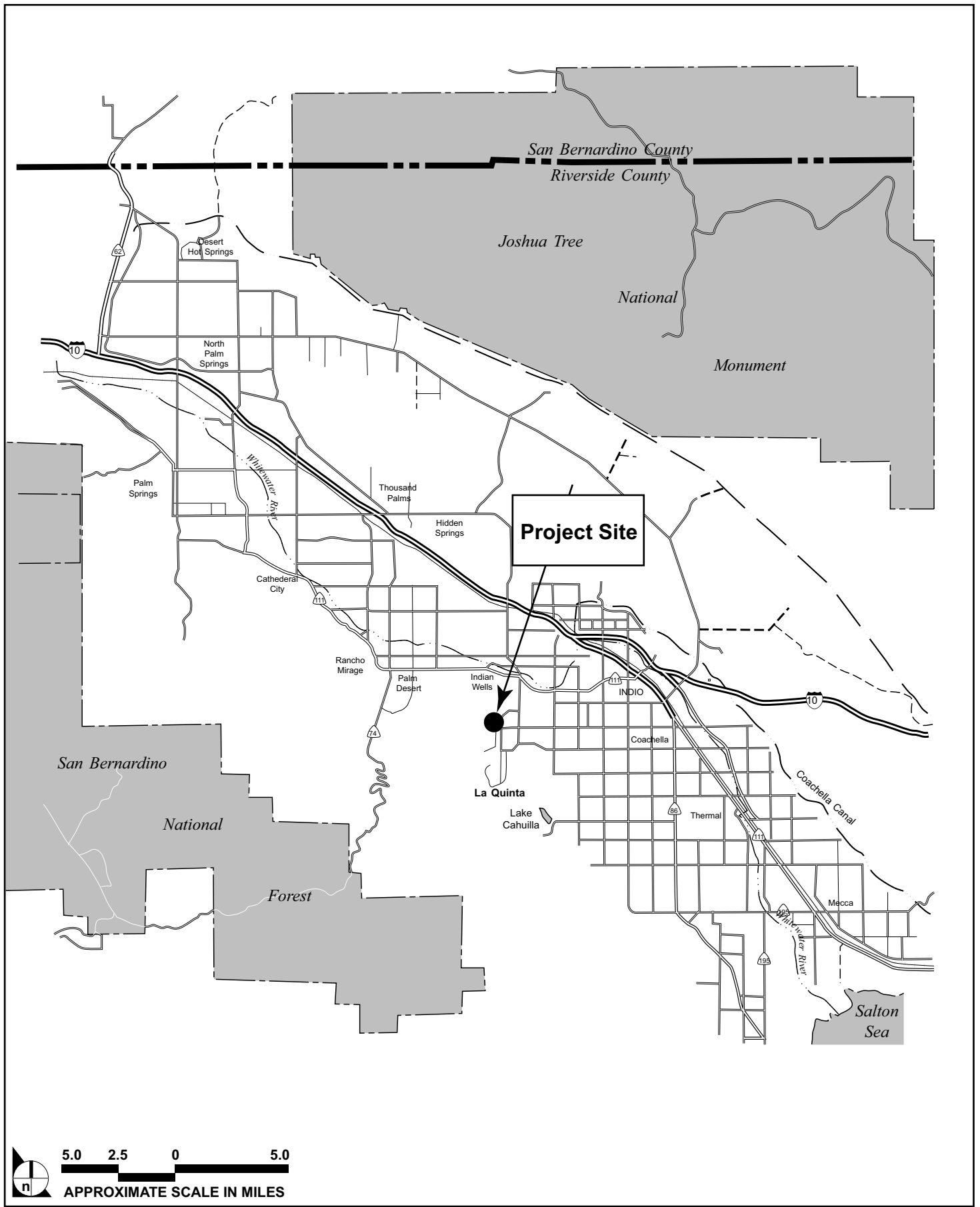
As illustrated in **Figure 1, Regional Location Map**, the project site is located in the City of La Quinta in eastern Riverside County. **Figure 2, Project Site and Surrounding Area**, presents an aerial photograph showing the location of the existing La Quinta Resort in the City of La Quinta. The La Quinta Resort is located west of Eisenhower Drive, south of Avenida Fernando and north and east of Calle Mazatlan in the City of La Quinta.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The La Quinta Resort, established in the 1920s, grew over time to include other property around the original resort grounds. The La Quinta Cove Golf Club Specific Plan, originally approved by Riverside County in 1975, regulates land uses in the 638-acre Specific Plan area. The City of La Quinta assumed administration of the Specific Plan upon incorporation in May 1982. The Specific Plan has been amended five times since it was originally approved. The current Specific Plan area includes the original resort grounds, two 18-hole golf courses, other recreational facilities and several private residential neighborhoods located around the resort grounds.

The current Specific Plan is made up of five Planning Areas. Planning Area 1 includes the La Quinta Resort grounds and the 48-Unit Tennis Villas Residential Community. The project proponent, La Quinta Resort, Inc. is proposing an amendment to the Specific Plan to allow the redevelopment of a portion of the La Quinta Resort located in Planning Area 1 to provide guests and visitors with the amenities, meeting space, and other improvements necessary to allow the resort to remain economically viable and competitive in the hotel market in the Coachella Valley. The primary objectives defined for the project include:

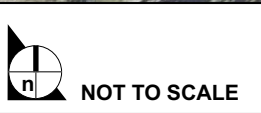
- Create an integrated resort experience which serves guests with a mix of commercial resort uses and offers a wide range of recreational opportunities.
- Encourage development of new and expanded facilities that are compatible with adjacent existing neighborhoods and the historic character of the resort.



SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. – December 2008

FIGURE 1

Regional Vicinity Map



SOURCE: Google Earth - 2008, Impact Sciences, Inc. - December 2008

FIGURE 2

## Project Site and Surrounding Area



- Improve the circulation pattern for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles, including service and delivery vehicles, within the resort grounds and surrounding community.
- Establish a parking management system that provides resort guests and visitors with a variety of parking options.

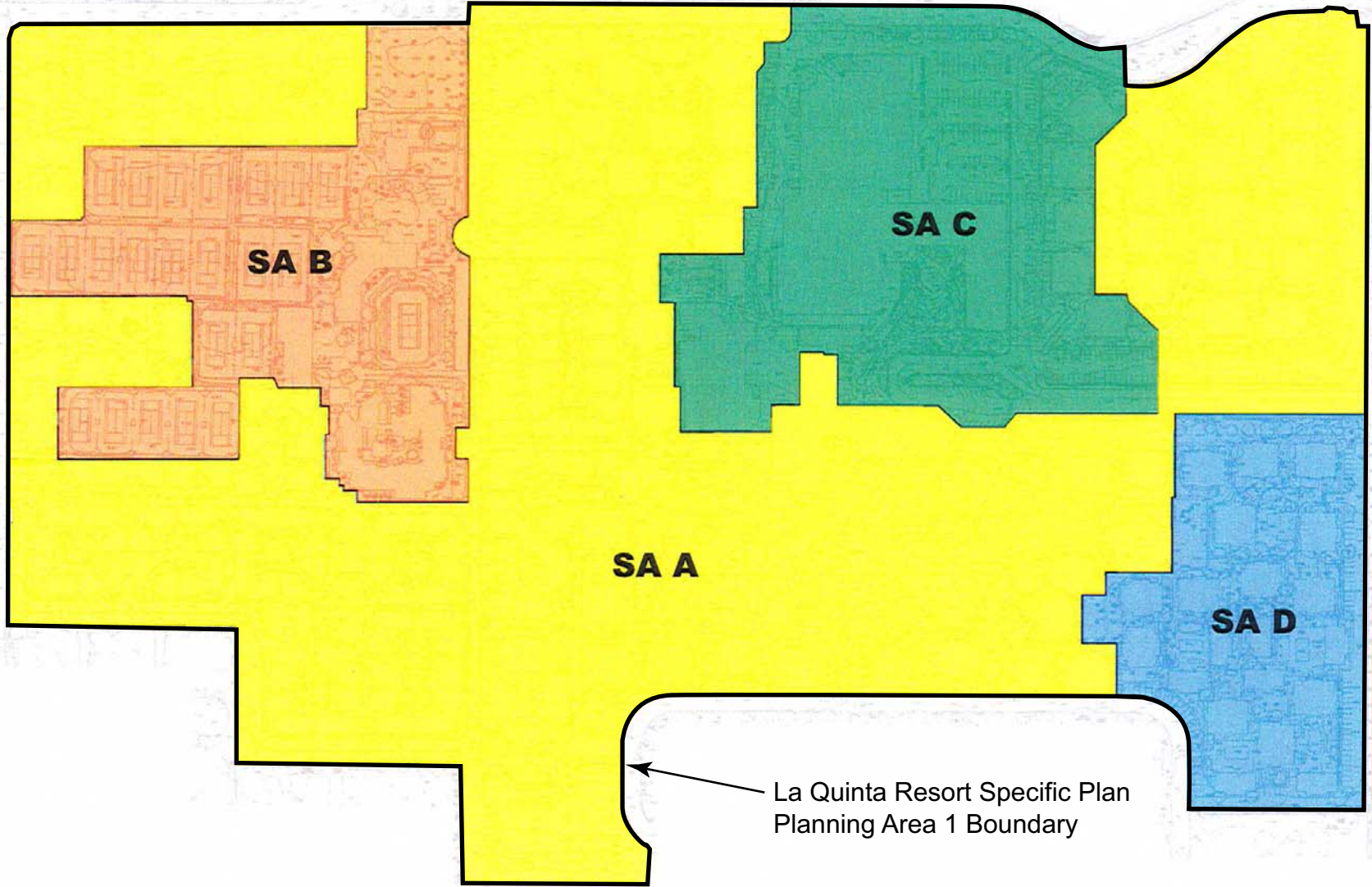
Planning Area 1 contains approximately 66 acres currently developed with the hotel, commercial and ancillary space related to the hotel and some residential condominium units. Existing development in this Planning Area includes 841 hotel guest rooms, approximately 198,000 square feet of commercial and ancillary support space and the 48 Tennis Villa condominium units.

The proposed project would involve the redevelopment of approximately 26 acres in Planning Area 1. Thirty-one structures containing 180 resort guest units and 46,500 square feet of related commercial and ancillary support space would be demolished. New development would include approximately 852 hotel units and 133,813 square feet of commercial and ancillary support space. The addition of approximately 1,100 new surface and subterranean parking spaces is proposed.

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment would create four planning Sub-Areas in Planning Area 1 to facilitate the development of new resort facilities. **Figure 3, Planning Areas**, shows the boundary of Planning Area 1 in the La Quinta Resort Specific Plan and the boundaries of the four proposed Sub-Areas, designated as Sub Areas (SA) A-D.

Sub-Area A would contain the majority of Planning Area 1. Existing development in this Sub-Area consists of 48 privately owned attached residential units, 641 resort villas, which are included in the rental pool managed by the hotel, 20 of the original hotel casitas units and approximately 22,000 square feet of commercial and ancillary space. No changes are proposed in Sub-Area A.

Redevelopment is proposed in Sub-areas B, C and D to accommodate the new resort facilities proposed. **Table 1, Project Summary**, shows the changes proposed in each Sub-Area. Sub-Area B would include approximately 9 acres located in the northwest corner of Planning Area 1. This area currently contains the resort tennis facility and related commercial facilities, including the resort spa facility. The proposed redevelopment of this Sub-Area would include removal of 18 of the existing 23 tennis courts, including the existing exhibition court, and the development of a new exhibition tennis court, up to 95 new resort villas and the addition of 7,500 square feet to the existing spa facility. The new resort villas would be in a mix of one- and two-story buildings with a variety of roof types and styles designed to complement the existing surrounding development.



 NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: La Quinta Resort Specific Plan Amendment – 2008

FIGURE 3

Proposed Planning Area 1 Sub-Areas

**Table 1  
La Quinta Resort Specific Plan Amendment No. 6  
Project Summary**

<b>Sub-Area</b>	<b>Size in Acres</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Existing Development</b>	<b>Demolition</b>	<b>New Development</b>	<b>Total Development</b>	<b>Net Change in Development</b>
A	40.6	Hotel	661 Units	None	661 Units	661 Units	None
		Commercial/ Ancillary	21,996 sq. ft.	None	21,996 sq. ft.	21,996 sq. ft.	None
		Residential	48 Units	None	48 Units	48 Units	None
B	9	Hotel	None	None	95 Units	95 Units	+ 95 Units
		Commercial/ Ancillary	34,474 sq. ft.	None	7,500 sq. ft.	42,947 sq. ft.	+7,500 sq. ft.
		Recreation	22 Tennis Courts	17 Tennis Courts	1 Stadium Tennis Court	5 Tennis Courts	-17 Tennis Courts
			1 Stadium Tennis Court	1 Stadium Tennis Court	1 Stadium Tennis Court	1 Stadium Tennis Court	
C	11	Hotel	84 Units	84 Units	502 Units	502 Units	+418 Units
		Commercial/ Ancillary	141,468 sq. ft.	46,500 sq. ft.	126,313 sq. ft.	221,281 sq. ft.	+79,813 sq. ft.
D	5.9	Hotel	96 Units	96 Units	255 Units	255 Units	+159 Units
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.5</b>	<b>Total Hotel</b>	<b>841 Units</b>	<b>180 Units</b>	<b>852 Units</b>	<b>1,513 Units</b>	<b>+672 Units</b>
		Total Commercial/ Ancillary	<b>197,938 sq. ft.</b>	<b>46,500 sq. ft.</b>	<b>133,813 sq. ft.</b>	<b>285,251 sq. ft.</b>	<b>+87,313 sq. ft.</b>
		Total Residential	<b>48 Units</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>48 Units</b>	<b>None</b>

*sq. ft. = square feet*

Sub-Area C, located in the northern portion of Planning Area 1 immediately south of Avenida Fernando, would include 11 acres that currently contain 84 resort villas and approximately 141,500 square feet of commercial and support space related to the hotel. Removal of the 84 existing resort villa units and approximately 46,500 square feet of the existing commercial space is proposed to allow the development of 502 additional hotel units and 126,313 square feet of commercial and related ancillary support space. The new hotel units would be located in two buildings located over new subterranean parking facilities. The buildings proposed in this Sub-Area would include a mix of one-, two-, three-, and four-story buildings. The maximum height for three-story buildings proposed is 56 feet at the top of the ridge of the roof and the maximum height at the top of the roof ridge for a four-story building is 66 feet.

Sub-Area D includes approximately 6 acres located in the southeastern corner of Planning Area 1. This Sub-Area currently contains 96 resort villas units. Redevelopment proposed in this Sub-Area would consist of replacement of these 96 units with 255 new golf villas, which would be included in the rental pool managed by the hotel. The new resort villas in this Sub-Area would also be in a mix of one- and two-story buildings with a variety of roof types and styles designed to complement the existing surrounding development.

Overall, the proposed project would result in a net increase of 672 hotel and resort villa condominium units and 87,313 square feet of commercial, meeting room and ancillary space related to the hotel. With this additional development, Planning Area 1 would include a new total of 1,561 hotel and condominium units and 285,251 square feet of commercial and ancillary space related to the hotel.

The majority of Planning Area 1 is designated Tourist Commercial by the La Quinta General Plan and the remainder is designated Medium Density Residential. All of the proposed development is consistent with these general plan land use designations and no general plan amendment is proposed.

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment does include changes to some of the development standards in the La Quinta Resort Specific Plan for Sub-Area C. Specifically, the maximum allowed height for buildings in Sub-Area C is proposed to be increased from 40 feet to 66 feet to allow for the development of four-story buildings instead of the three-story buildings that can be developed within the existing 40-foot height limit. In addition, architectural features, such as chimneys, spires and other building projections that do not contain useable space would be allowed to project up to 15-feet above the maximum allowed 66-foot building height.

In addition to the proposed Specific Plan Amendment, approval of a Development Agreement and Site Development Permit is also being requested.



## **POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT**

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed project consistent with Section 15060 of the 2008 *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes and Guidelines*, the City of La Quinta Planning Department has determined that an EIR should be prepared for this proposed project. In addition, consistent with Section 15082 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the City of La Quinta Planning Department has identified the following probable environmental effects of the project, which will be addressed in the EIR for this project:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources (Historic Resources and Paleontology)
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

The City of La Quinta Planning Department has determined that there is not a likelihood of potentially significant effects related to the environmental topics listed below. The City proposes that the EIR indicate the reasons why these effects were determined not to be significant and are therefore not addressed in detail in the EIR:

- Agricultural Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The City of La Quinta Planning Department will consider comments received in response to this Notice of Preparation in determining the scope and content of the EIR for this project. Any comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and your reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the EIR.

Please provide your comments in writing to:

City of La Quinta  
Planning Department  
P.O. Box 1504  
La Quinta, California 92247  
Attention: Wallace H. Nesbit, Principal Planner

*Notice of Preparation*

The City of La Quinta will be holding a scoping meeting on **January 22, 2009**, starting at **4:00 PM** in the **Study Session Room** at the **City of La Quinta City Hall, 78-495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta, California 92253**, to provide information on the proposed project and accept comments on the potential environmental effects of the project.

Thank you for your participation in the environmental review of this project.