

May 1, 2024

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**Subject: City of Palm Desert General Plan Circulation Element Update Scope of Work**

**P24-2461**

Fehr & Peers is pleased to support the City of Palm Desert's efforts to update the City's General Plan Circulation Element. Fehr & Peers was part of the previous update to the Circulation Element that was last updated in 2016. Since its adoption, several state policies and regulations have been put in place addressing roadway safety, vehicle miles of travel (VMT) emergency evacuation, and other requirements. Additionally, as we have discussed, the element needs a content update is needed to ensure consistency with the area plans and consistency with recommendations in the City's Active Transportation Plan.

Below please find the proposed scope of work, including optional tasks for the City's consideration.

## **Task 1: Project Management**

### *Task 1.1: Kick-Off Meeting*

Fehr & Peers will work with the City's Project Manager to schedule a project kickoff meeting. Fehr & Peers will prepare a draft agenda to discuss the project schedule and goals, and to confirm the approach to the transportation technical analyses, including travel demand modeling assumptions, roadway network scenarios, and the analysis scenario years. The team will also discuss available data sources and traffic count locations. In addition, we will discuss contract management and invoicing to ensure we submit invoices in accordance with City requirements.

### *Task 1.2: Regular Project Meetings*

Recurring monthly meetings will be scheduled between Fehr & Peers and City staff to review analyses, deliverables, discuss findings, raise any issues or concerns, and provide an update on next steps.

### *Task 1.3: Contract Management*

Fehr & Peers will submit monthly progress reports and invoices. The progress reports will recap work associated with the monthly invoice.



### **Task 1 Deliverables:**

1. Kick-Off Meeting Agenda, including project schedule, data needs, regular status updates/meetings, and invoicing.
2. Monthly check-in calls/meetings (agendas and meeting minutes will be provided).
3. Monthly invoices and progress reports.

## **Task 2: Existing Conditions**

### *Task 2.1: Data Collection and Review*

Fehr & Peers' initial will include a review of relevant documents including the current General Plan, recent CEQA documents, regional planning documents (such as the Congestion Management Plan (CMP), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Area and Specific Plans, documents prepared by CVAG, local transit/active transportation plans, recent traffic impact studies prepared for new development, and any other planning documents that would provide additional information relative to the Circulation Update effort. The purpose of this review is to identify existing data needs and determine which of the previous data collection and mapping efforts can be employed in this analysis.

Fehr & Peers will use SCAG's data portal to pull Streetlight estimates of daily traffic volumes on the same segments collected as part of the 2016 effort. We will compare the Streetlight data to the 2016 dataset and discuss the changes in traffic volumes projected by Streetlight on these segments. We can also supplement with available traffic counts from other traffic studies in the area and/or from available traffic counts reported to CVAG.

We do not anticipate that traffic volumes would have changed significantly and, as such, we don't believe there is a lot of value in collecting new traffic counts (outside of using the free Streetlight data from SCAG). We will discuss this with City staff as part of our scope finalization and can work with the City to include additional traffic count data if desired for an additional fee.

### *Task 2.2: Existing Conditions Assessment*

Using the data collected in Task 2.1, a background technical report will be prepared documenting existing conditions in the area. This will include a regulatory context summarizing recent legislative requirements the General Plan should consider, existing roadway network classifications, existing and proposed active transportation facilities, transit service, existing truck and rail facilities, and relevant census information such as commute trip information, mode split information, and relative locations of where Palm Desert residents work and vice versa. Key issues and opportunities will be documented in this report. This report will also summarize the Streetlight traffic count data on study roadway segments and will highlight areas where traffic counts have changed significantly since the 2016 assessment was completed.



Fehr & Peers will prepare a draft background technical report and submit it to the City for one round of consolidated comments. Fehr & Peers has budgeted up to four hours of staff time to review comments and make edits to the draft background technical report before submitting as final.

#### *Task 2.3: Safety Assessment*

Fehr & Peers will analyze publicly available collision information to summarize roadway collision trends that will assist in identifying a High Injury Network (HIN) as required by SB 932. This HIN network will be used to supplement and inform policies in this element update. Fehr & Peers will also work with the City to better understand and reference the City's Vision Zero Strategy study that we understand was funded through the last funding cycle associated with the Safe Streets for All (SS4A). These findings will be provided in a series of charts that will be included in the existing conditions background technical report.

#### *Task 2.4: Update Travel Demand Model*

Fehr & Peers will utilize either the latest version of the RIVCOM travel demand model or the previously developed City model for this effort. Specifically, we will utilize the Streetlight data and compare base year land use to better understand which model does a better job at estimating exiting travel demand in the area. Outside of updating the base year roadway network in the City limits and performing a high-level land use review, we have not included budget to calibrate either model as part of this effort – rather we will use the most appropriate tool as part of our assessment. Once the appropriate model platform is identified, a baseline model run of the current General Plan land use and roadway network will be prepared. Next, any proposed changes in land use and the roadway network will be updated in the model. The model will be used to compare the Adopted General Plan Circulation Element and the proposed Circulation Element Update with any associated land use changes.

We anticipate that this traffic model will be employed for the following purposes:

- Testing roadway network and classification alternatives
- Analyzing the level of service at study roadway segments
- Forecasting VMT for the City using a couple of different methods. This can be used to better understand how VMT can/should be incorporated into the City's policy document and to help inform VMT guidelines for the City.

Please note that our effort does not include assessing the study intersections that were previously evaluated in the General Plan. Fehr & Peers believes that, with the switch to VMT, it is (1) not needed for the circulation element and (2) implies a level of certainty related to driveway locations associated with future development that is not available at this level.



### **Task 2 Deliverables:**

1. List and map of study segments for Streetlight data collection
2. Draft background technical report, including safety assessment
3. Final background technical report, including safety assessment

## **Task 3: Alternatives Development**

### *Task 3.1: Engagement & Coordination*

Fehr & Peers will meet with City Staff to review transportation network issues and needs based on existing and expected network operations. Additionally, Fehr & Peers will hold one council workshop to review current issues and potential opportunities with various stakeholders. Additional engagement opportunities (e.g. online surveys) can be considered but are not included in our scope/fee estimate.

### *Task 3.2: Roadway Network Alternatives Development*

It is anticipated that up to two (2) proposed alternatives will be developed consisting of roadway network, lane, classification, and/or truck routing changes. The updated travel demand model will be used to determine a single preferred roadway network alternative for a future year model. Fehr & Peers will discuss with City Staff the appropriate approach to developing forecasts for this effort.

### **Task 3 Deliverables:**

1. Council issues and opportunities workshop materials and attendance
2. Memorandum documenting input from stakeholders, proposed alternatives, and VMT differences for each alternative

## **Task 4: SB 743 Transportation Impact Assessment Guidelines**

We will prepare Transportation Study Guidelines that cover both the CEQA requirements under SB 743, as well as the City's desire to maintain Level of Service (LOS) requirements. Fehr & Peers will review the City's current Transportation Study Guidelines and state requirements provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

As part of this effort, we will prepare detailed guidelines that explain how to prepare a VMT assessment for screening out projects, as well as how to prepare a VMT analysis for projects that do not screen out. We will also work with City Staff to identify areas of the City where the LOS expectations may need to change. Changes will be incorporated into the Transportation Study Guidelines. Maps will be prepared to identify development locations that screen out of VMT assessment.



#### **Task 4 Deliverables:**

1. Draft Transportation Study Guidelines
2. Final Transportation Study Guidelines

### **Task 5: Roadway Network Recommendations**

#### *Task 5.1: Roadway Network Alternatives Modeling*

Fehr & Peers will model up to two roadway network changes. As part of this exercise, we will calculate the VMT changes associated with the roadway network alternatives.

#### *Task 5.2: Roadway Classifications and Roadway Network Recommendations*

Fehr & Peers will review the results of the alternative roadway network analyses and develop recommendations for altering functional operations and mobility within each roadway classification. These recommendations may consist of changes to roadway classifications or network changes, such as vacating roadway segments, adding or reducing capacity to existing roadways, and/or safety or operational improvements. These changes will consider potential effects on other transportation modes, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit. We will also review existing truck routes and recommend changes to support industrial development and goods movement.

Changes will also include a review of roadway cross-sections to ensure consistency within the General Plan (e.g. consistency with the area plans within the document) and consistency with other planning documents in the City (like the ATP).

#### **Task 5 Deliverables:**

1. Draft Technical Memorandum recommending changes to roadway classifications and/or the City roadway network
2. VMT modeling showing change in VMT
3. Present proposed changes (a PowerPoint presentation and present at one (1) meeting)
4. Final Technical Memorandum recommending changes to roadway classifications and/or the City roadway network with input from meeting incorporated per City Staff's direction

### **Task 6: Circulation Element Update**

Based on recommendations provided in Task 5 and discussions with City Staff, Fehr & Peers will develop an initial set of transportation policies related to various items for incorporating into the Circulation Element Update, including but not limited to:

- VMT transportation impacts
- Level of Service (LOS)



- Maximum allowable roadway cross sections
- Consistency with other state laws (e.g. SB 330, SB 35)
- Coachella Valley Passenger Rail Service
- Transit System
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- Safety and Vision Zero Strategies
- Emergency Evacuation Routes

These policy changes will address changes in state law, specifically AB 1358 (Complete Streets requirement), SB 932 (Safe Systems and Vision Zero Approach requirement), SB 743, and SB 330 (clarifying roadway improvement requirements for new housing developments). We envision these changes to result in minor changes to the Circulation Element that will result in a minimal impact on the environment.

Fehr & Peers will develop the initial policies and present these policies to City Staff for review. Fehr & Peers will combine the information developed in the previous tasks into a comprehensive Circulation Element (including text, graphics, and policies). An implementation matrix will also be prepared to align action steps with added and edited policies.

### **Task 6 Deliverables:**

1. Draft Circulation Element Update and Implementation Matrix
2. Final Circulation Element Update Implementation Matrix

### **Task 7: CEQA Addendum**

We will engage PlaceWorks to complete this effort as Mark Teague, a Principal with PlaceWorks, was the CEQA lead for the General Plan EIR when he was at Michael Baker International (MBI). Mark's extensive understanding of CEQA and the General Plan EIR will streamline this effort for the City.

The focus of the project will be to update the Circulation Element of the General Plan to create better guidance on meeting Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) reductions, improve safety by incorporating Vision Zero, and review of the policies to ensure they meet the needs of the City. No new roadways or substantial change in the roadway configuration is expected, though the road design may be updated to meet the needs of the project. Rather than prepare an IS/MND or new EIR, we recommend preparation of an Addendum pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15164. Because the changes can be considered minor, the General Plan EIR (SCH# 2015081020) can be used for the proposed changes. We do not believe that the intent is to recommend change(s) that would result new, or substantially greater impacts than were evaluated in the General Plan EIR. The use of an Addendum builds on the investment in the General Plan made by the City, and significantly shortens the time for consideration of the project.





Finally, as the City's decision to use an Addendum for this project is supported with substantial evidence on the record, the decision enjoys the same protection as the General Plan EIR if challenged.

PlaceWorks will provide an Administrative Draft Addendum following a format discussed during the kickoff meeting. Their default format for an Addendum follows the findings in §15162 rather than using an initial study. If a formal initial study is requested, we will need to increase the budget and scope accordingly. All impacts identified in the General Plan EIR affected by the recommended changes will be reviewed in the context of the overall General Plan and the analysis in the General Plan EIR. One administrative draft will be provided for review. The final draft of the Addendum will be used to support the CEQA determination during the hearing(s) for the proposed project.

### *SB-18 Tribal Consultation*

While an Addendum does not trigger the AB-52 requirements for Tribal consultation, all General Plan Amendments must comply with SB-18. PlaceWorks will complete the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on-line form requesting a tribal contact list. Using the addresses on the list from NAHC, PlaceWorks will draft letters (on City letterhead) to each of the tribes on the NAHC list inquiring whether they want consultation. Following the consultation meeting (or more typically a conference call), PlaceWorks will provide the written outcome of the process and a record for the project. Completion of the SB 18 process is needed prior to acting on the project.

This scope does not include:

- Public distribution of document
- Attendance at public hearings
- Copies
- Filing fees
- Technical studies (i.e. traffic, AQ, GHG, Noise)

### **Task 7 Deliverables:**

1. Administrative Draft and Public Draft Addendum, SB-18 Tribal Consultation Letters, Notice of Determination, Notice of Completion.

## **Optional Task 8: Citywide Travel Demand Model Development**

If desired by the City, Fehr & Peers can develop a new stand-alone City model as part of this effort. The cost of a stand-alone City model is extensive, likely \$200,000 or more, and Fehr & Peers is not convinced that investing in a new model adds that level of value for the City compared to using/updating the previous model or using/updating RIVCOM. We can reassess with the City after we collect traffic counts as to the level of effort and an approach that adds the



highest level of value for the City. Additionally, it is our understanding that, if REAP funding is not cut to balance the state budget, CVAG may be undertaking an effort to develop tools and refined modeling to assist with VMT forecasting that the City could take advantage of at that time.

Given these reasons, we would propose that the City not approach this project with the expectation that a new model should be created – rather, the City should see how the available tools replicate more recent data and we can discuss the value a new model may provide (or not provide) before pre-building it into our scope of services.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with this scope of services. We have attached our cost estimate and schedule to this proposal for your reference as well and look forward to potentially having the opportunity to review and coordinate these services with the City.

Sincerely,

FEHR & PEERS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. D. Pack".

Jason D. Pack, PE  
Principal

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Wolfe".

Brian Wolfe  
Engineer/Planner

*Attachment: Proposed Fee and Schedule*