

Downtown Land Use Changes GPA/ZOA25-0001

PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 28, 2025



Project Request

In summary City staff is proposing a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and a Zoning Text Amendment (ZOA) to include the following:

GPA (Case File GPA25-0001):

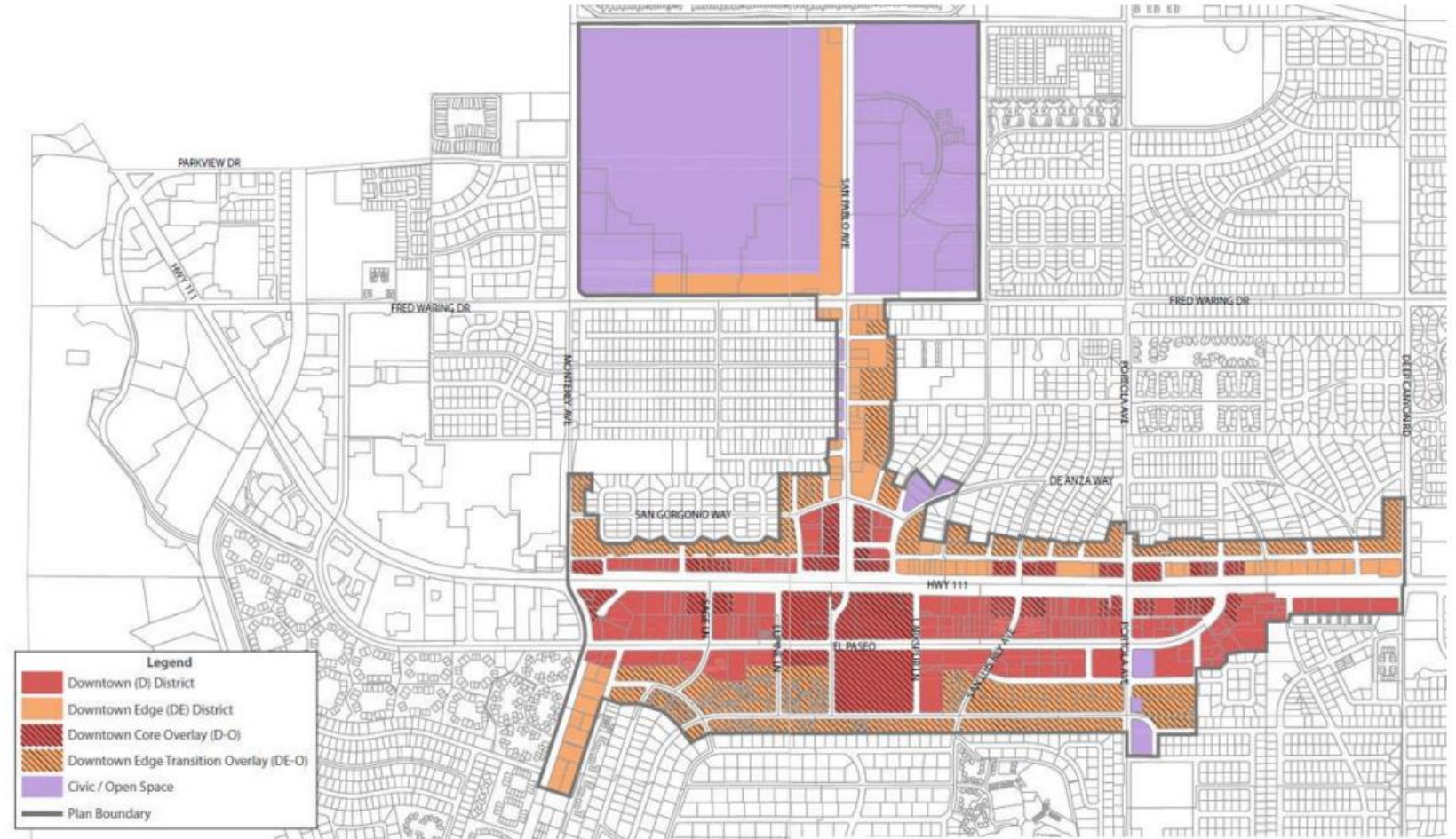
- Add language explicitly allowing single-family dwellings in City Center/Downtown, near residential edges (Alessandro Dr, Shadow Mountain Dr, Tumbleweed Ln).
- Remove 12-unit/acre minimum density
- Set maximum density at 40 units/acre.
- Revise and clarify language in the “Intent and Purpose” section of the City Center/Downtown land use designation to:
 - Reinforce the allowance of moderate- to high-intensity mixed-use development, and
 - Explicitly state that hotel uses are permitted.

ZOA (Case File ZOA25-0001):

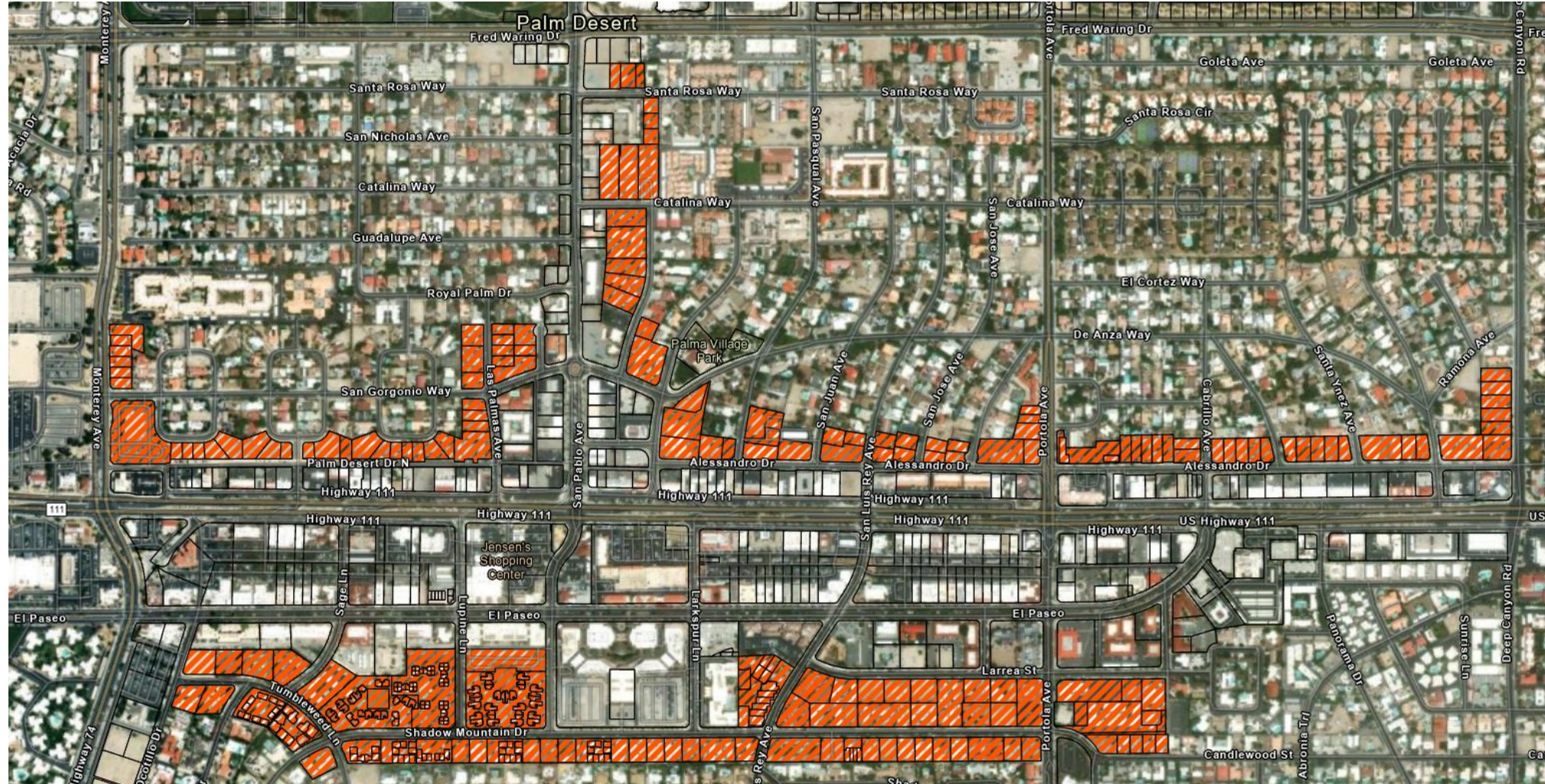
- Amend Chapter 25.18.040 (Land Use and Permit Requirements) to:
 - Permit single-family dwellings by right in DE-O (instead of prohibited)
 - Allow day care centers with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in DE-O

Vicinity Map

Figure 1 – Downtown Zoning Map



Downtown Edge Transition Overlay District



Single Family Dwellings

The DE-O is mostly comprised of a mixture of residential uses, with occasional nonresidential uses. The DE-O currently has single-family dwellings located on multiple parcels, which are currently considered legal nonconforming. New single-family dwellings are currently prohibited within DE-O.

Day Care Centers

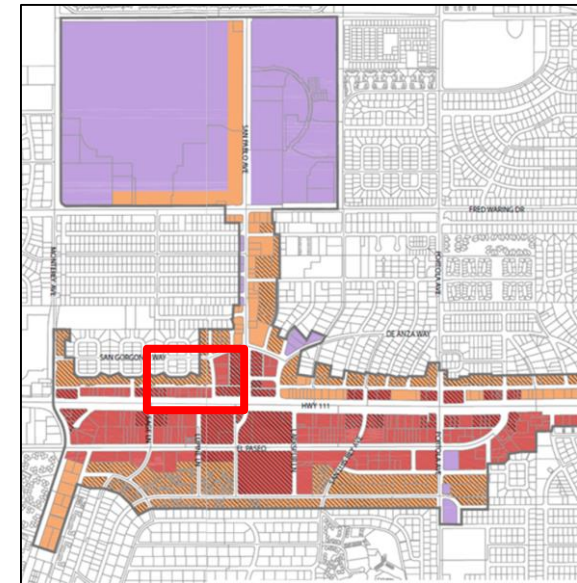
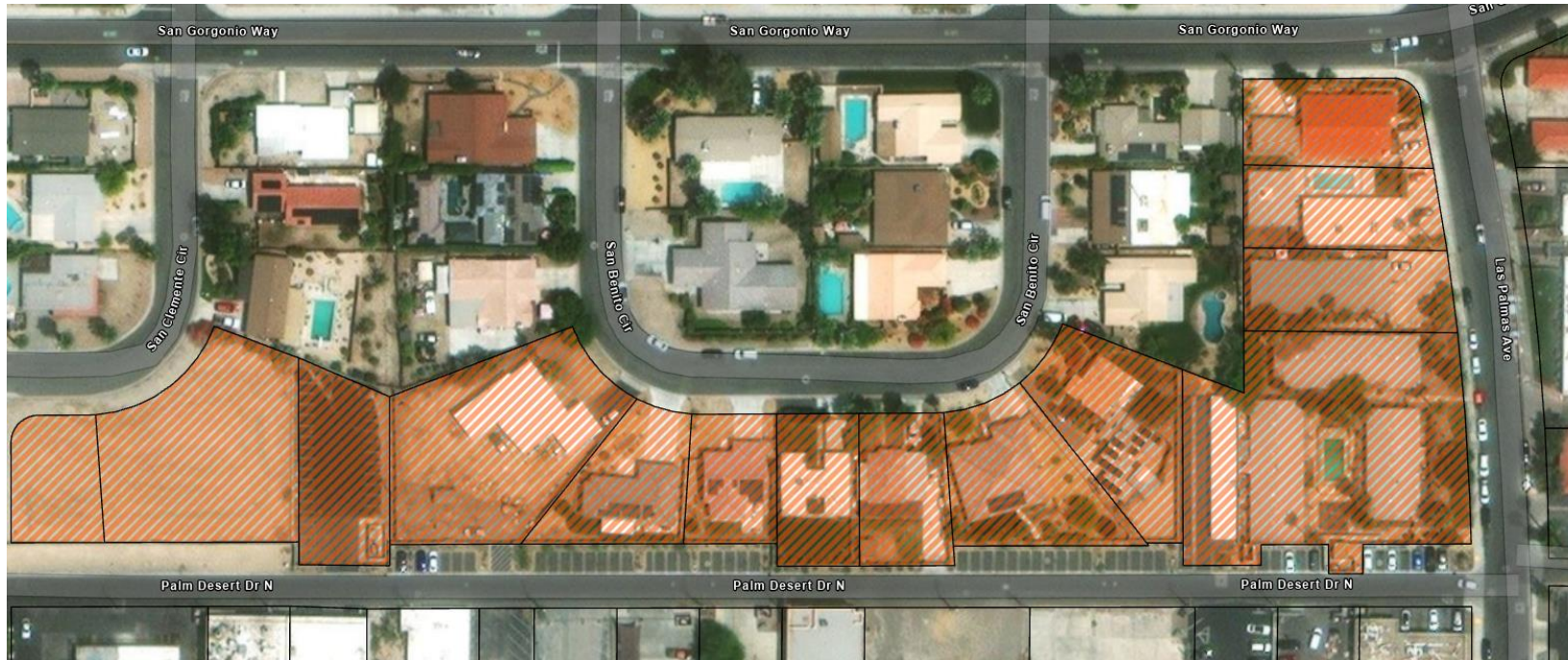
Land Use	Zone			
	D	D-O	DE	DE-O
Recreation, Resources Preservation, Open Space, and Public Assembly Uses				
Club, private	N	N	N	C
Day care center	C ¹	C ¹	N	N
Day care, large family	N	N	N	P
Day care, small family	N	N	N	P
Institution, educational	N	N	C	C

Day care facilities. Facilities that provide care and supervision of minor children for periods of less than 24 hours. These facilities include the following, all of which are required to be licensed by the State Department of Social Services:

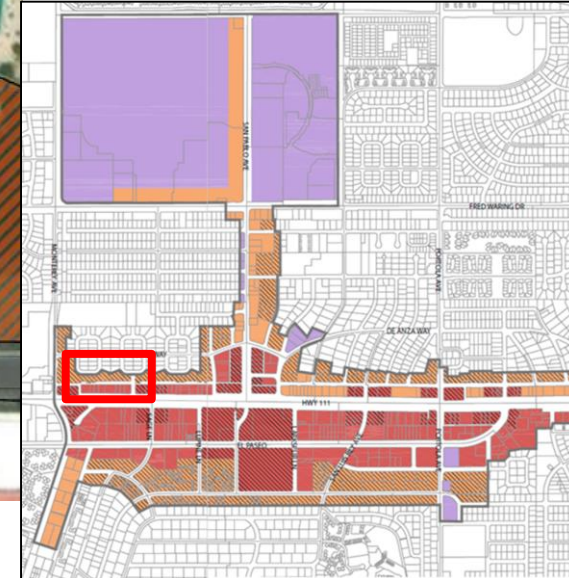
1. Day care center. A commercial or nonprofit child or adult day care facility not operated as a small or large family day care home. Includes infant centers, preschools, extended day care facilities, and facilities for adults who require supervision and care because of advanced age, mental or physical deterioration, dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, or similar disabling condition. These may be operated as part of a business, school, or religious facility, or as an independent land use.
2. Day care, large family. A day care facility located in a single-family residence where an occupant of the residence provides care and supervision for 9 to 14 children. Children under the age of 10 years who reside in the home count as children served by the day care facility.
3. Day care, small family. A day care facility located in a single-family residence where an occupant of the residence provides care and supervision for eight or fewer children. Children under the age of 10 years who reside in the home count as children served by the day care facility.

Downtown Edge Transition Overlay District

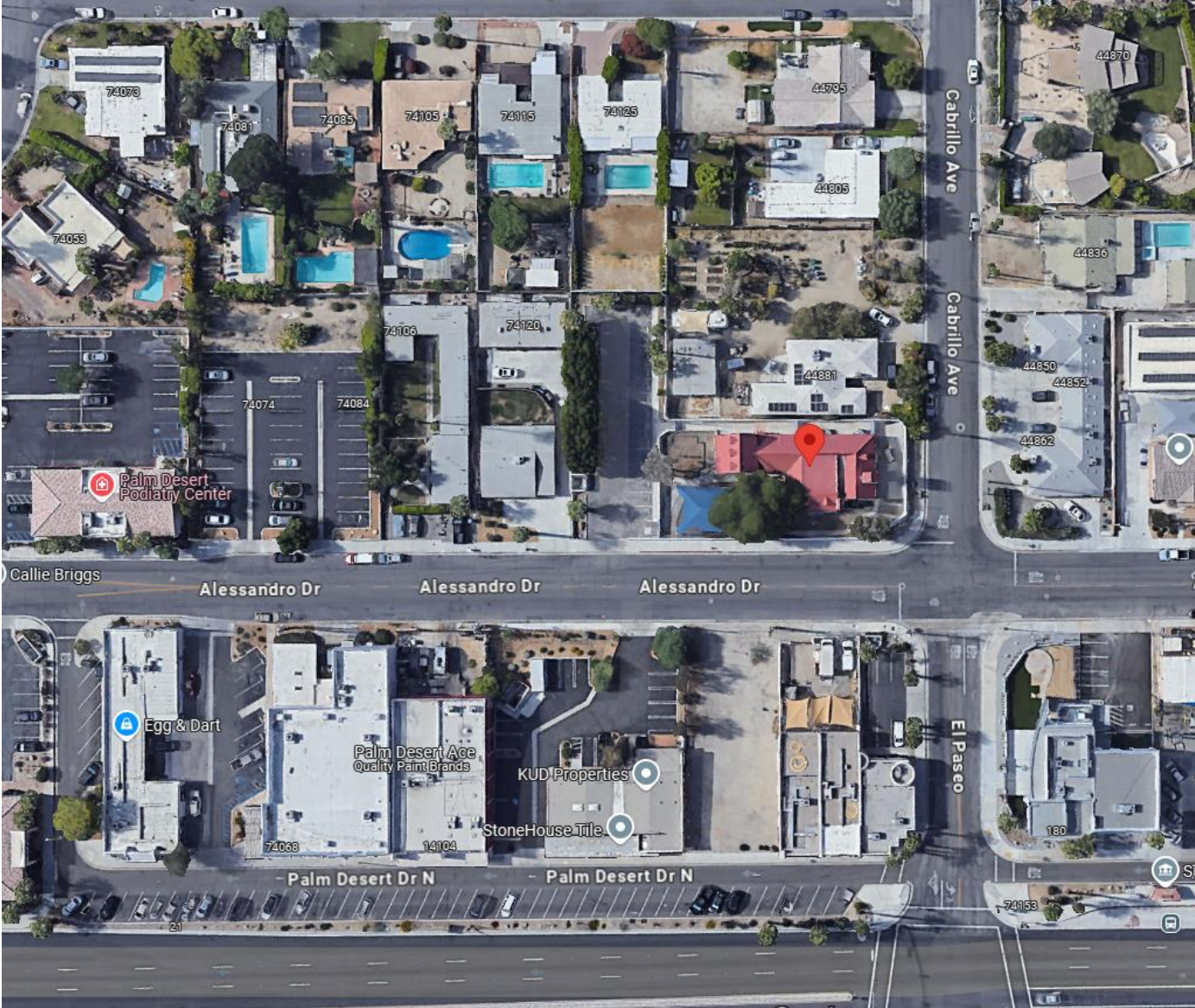
Example area of SFD below showing areas adjacent to Alessandro Alley, north of Highway 111.



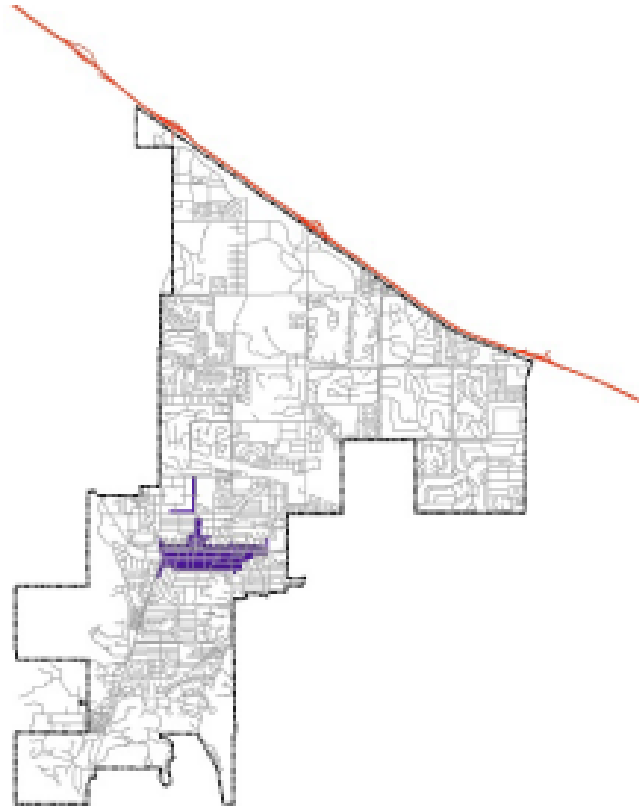
Downtown Edge Transition Overlay District



44911 Cabrillo



Land Use	Zone			
	D	D-O	DE	DE-O
Residential Uses				
Accessory dwelling unit	P	P	P	P
Assisted Living	N	N	N	C
Condominium	C ¹	C ¹	C	C
Dwelling, duplex	C ¹	C ¹	C	P
Dwelling, multifamily	C ¹	C ¹	C	P
Dwelling, single-family	C ¹	C ¹	C	N P
Group home	C ¹	C ¹	C	N
Junior accessory dwelling unit	P	P	P	P
Home-based business	P ⁴	P ⁴	P ⁴	P ⁴
Agriculture-Related Uses				
Garden, private	C ¹	C ¹	N	P
Greenhouse, private	N	N	C	P
Horticulture, private	N	N	C	P
Recreation, Resources Preservation, Open Space, and Public Assembly Uses				
Club, private	N	N	N	C
Day care center	C ¹	C ¹	N	N C ¹



City Center/Downtown

Intent & Purpose

To provide moderate to high-intensity mixed-use development anchored by civic, cultural, entertainment, hotel, retail and dining activity that features a variety of building sizes and housing choices.

Development Intensities

DU/AC: ~~12.0~~ Up to 40

Commercial FAR: Up to 2.5

Allowed Land Uses



A variety of civic, cultural, entertainment, retail, restaurant, and commercial services activity along with multi-family dwellings organized along walkable streetscapes.

Single family residential may be located in areas of downtown abutting existing neighborhoods near Alessandro Drive, Shadow Mountain Drive and Tumbleweed Lane. Ground floor uses include retail, restaurant, service, and office uses, while upper floors may accommodate residential and/or office uses. Residential uses are generally prohibited on building ground floors fronting El Paseo and Highway 111.

Public Review

Environment Assessment/Environmental Review:

The City's Development Services Department finds that this is not a "project," as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and concerns general policy and procedures, pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) General Rule of the CEQA Guidelines of the CEQA Guidelines.

Public Input: Public noticing was conducted for August 28, 2025 Council meeting per the requirements of PDMC Section 25.60.060 and Government Code Sections 65090 to 65094 and 65854. City staff has received no comments on the project as of the date of this report.

Planning Commission Recommendation: On July 15, 2025, the Planning Commission held a duly noted public hearing and adopted Planning Commission resolution No. 2895 which recommended the City Council approve GPA/ZOA 25-0001, as presented.

Recommendation

1. Hold a public hearing and introduce an Ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESEERT, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY THE CITY CENTER/DOWNTOWN SECTION OF THE GENERAL PLAN TO REMOVE MINIMUM DENSITY REQUIREMENTS AND CLARIFIES ALLOWED LAND USE TYPES AND MAKING A FINDING OF EXEMPTION UNDER CEQA.”
2. Adopt a Resolution entitled, “A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT TO MODIFY TITLE 25 (ZONING) OF THE PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADD SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AND DAY CARE CENTERS AS AN ALLOWED LAND USE TYPE AND MAKING A FINDING OF EXEMPTION UNDER CEQA.”