



**FACT SHEET:
Significance of Section 14 and FAQs**

Q. Where is Section 14?

A. The Palm Springs area is home to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Section 14 lies adjacent to the Palm Springs downtown area. Section 14 is bordered by Alejo Road on the north, Sunrise Way on the east, Ramon Road on the south, and Indian Canyon on the west. The Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Springs is located near the intersection of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Indian Canyon, the site of the new Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza.

On May 15, 1876, President Ulysses S. Grant designated Section 14 and a portion of Section 22 (Tahquitz Canyon) as the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation. Subsequently, in 1877, President Rutherford B. Hayes expanded the reservation to encompass the even-numbered sections in three townships, totaling over 30,000 acres, all of which were under tribal ownership.

Q. Who lived in Section 14?

A. Members of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, numbering about 50 in 1948, lived in Section 14 with non-Native Americans, predominantly working-class people, including African Americans, Mexicans, Filipinos, and Caucasians.

Due to federal land leasing laws, the Agua Caliente were unable to develop their land until the late 1950s. To address this, Tribal landowners leased Section 14 land to working-class individuals, offering them cheap rental options. However, until 1955, Tribal members could only lease their land for five-year terms, subject to revocation with just a 30-day notice by the federal government. Consequently, tenants had little incentive to invest significant money into their tenancies and instead erected various types of makeshift homes.

Q. What happened to Section 14 in the 1950s-1960s?

A. Throughout 1950-1960, properties in Section 14 – many of which were makeshift homes for the renters – were abated by burning and demolition due to health concerns and ongoing development efforts. For more information, check out the [History of Section 14 fact sheet](#).

Q. How was Section 14 addressed in the courts?

A. In 1967, a couple renting a home in Section 14 sued the City, alleging improper demolition of the house that they were living in, located at 430 N. Calle Encilia, Palm

Springs. (Joe H. Leonard and Virginia B. Leonard v. City of Palm Springs, Riv. Sup. Ct. Case No. Indio 10879.) The trial court ruled, in July of 1968, that the City had not violated the legal rights of the tenants, because the City demolished the structure pursuant to authorization from the property owner, Ms. Dora Prieto. This case demonstrated that former Section 14 residents had access to the judicial process at the time and confirmed that the City acted lawfully when conducting the substandard housing abatement process ordered by the State.

Q. What equity efforts are the City of Palm Springs and City Council committing to?

A. On April 11, 2024, the City of Palm Springs and City Council committed to the following. Negotiations with the Section 14 survivors and descendants are still pending.

- Build more affordable housing by contributing to a Community Land Trust.
- Focus collective efforts on exploring ways to increase economic opportunities; especially with small businesses in underserved communities.
- Explore the feasibility of a healing or cultural center, dedicated to Section 14, directing Staff to coordinate with county, state, and federal governments for possible funding.
- Reaffirm a commitment to hiring a consultant for a historical context study, asking staff to come back within 90 days on the hiring of that consultant and next steps.
- Consider other potential programs which would include the possible renaming of a community park, dedication of an art installation, and/or creating a Day of Remembrance.
- Direct the City Attorney to explore claims made to the City by the residents of those displaced from Section 14. The City and City Council offered a \$4.3M settlement.

Q. How did the City of Palm Springs and the City Council determine the \$4.3M settlement?

A. The settlement covers properties from 1965-1968. The City Council determined the \$4.3M settlement offer based on public records, and would establish residency through documents such as census records and birth certificates.

A review of records discovered last year included an abatement chronology, which reported there were 235 total abatements on Section 14. The total number of structures and/or dwellings not abandoned on Section 14 was 143. There were two other dwellings abated in 1968 -1969, according to City records. That brings the total number to 145 properties.

Based on the official court records of the Leonard case, the value of a house in 1965 was no more than \$2,000. Assuming an additional \$1,000 worth of personal property in

each such house, \$3,000 in 1965 has a present value of roughly \$30,000. For 145 households, this brings the total settlement offer to approximately \$4.3M.

Q. Why is the City of Palm Springs and City Council committing to equity efforts for Section 14?

A. The City of Palm Springs and City Council recognize that City funds were used to clear land that housed individuals and families who were tenants on the property, including marginalized and minority communities. The City and Council are committed to continuing the conversation with the survivors of Section 14 and all residents of Palm Springs as they work together to address the inequities of the past.