

1. Project Description

1.1. Project Overview and Location

The proposed project consists of two primary components: (1) the Safari Highlands Ranch (SHR) project and (2) the citywide Sphere of Influence (SOI) update. The SHR project proposes a 550-unit single-family residential development with a fire station and public and private recreational amenities on approximately 1,098 acres. **Appendix 1.1** includes the entirety of the Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan, considered a necessary companion to this section.

The SHR project site is located in an unincorporated area of northeastern San Diego County, California, approximately 30 miles north of downtown San Diego and 18 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. The property is east of the Rancho San Pasqual community (580 homes), northeast of the Rancho Vistamonte community (80 homes), and just north of the San Diego Zoo Safari Park (see **Figure 1-1A, Safari Highlands Ranch Location Map**).

The SOI update includes seven Candidate Study Areas (including the SHR project site, identified as Candidate Study Area 1) being considered for annexation into the City of Escondido limits, as well as certain areas that may be removed from the SOI. Locations of the Candidate Study Areas are shown in **Figure 1-1B, Sphere of Influence Study Areas**. The goal of the SOI update is to create more logical borders to reflect the City's vision for the future expansion and to facilitate the identified lands being served by the City at a later date. It is important to note that other than the SHR project, no development projects are currently proposed on lands affected by the SOI update.

1.2. Project Objectives

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15124(b) requires the project description to contain a statement of objectives that includes the underlying purpose of the proposed project. The objectives of the two primary project components (SHR project and SOI update) are identified below.

1.2.1. Safari Highlands Ranch Project Objectives

1. Provide housing opportunities in a rural setting that is consistent with the City of Escondido 2013-2021 Housing Element, including the goals and objectives of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, while minimizing environmental effects and permanently preserving surrounding open space and habitat.
2. Design the project to appeal to the area's growing demand for high-quality, one- and two-story single-family residential homes that is compatible in density and character to the surrounding community.
3. Use clustering and efficient design form to respect and integrate natural resources on-site while enhancing the City's ability to provide fiscally positive development.
4. Cluster residential lots and provide a development that is consistent with the goals of the MSCP as expressed in the County of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Plan (SC-MSCP) by limiting the development footprint to minimize environmental impacts, and mitigating environmental impacts in accordance with MSCP ratios.

5. Maintain the aesthetic and rural character of the area by avoiding significant impacts to major topographical features such as rock outcroppings, drainages, steep slopes, and existing views from surrounding neighborhoods.
6. Provide community benefits such as a new fire station, public trails, and other off-site community improvements.
7. Construct sustainable residential neighborhoods that include the use of reclaimed water for irrigation and that utilize sustainable building materials and practices.

1.2.2. Sphere of Influence Update Objectives

1. Amend the City's Sphere of Influence to include territory that can ultimately be served adequately by municipal services, incorporate adjacent lands that, through future annexation, expand opportunities for quality development and economic growth or provide community benefits consistent with San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) SOI policies.
2. Remove certain lands from SOI located north of the City's boundary such that the SOI boundaries follow parcel lines, streets, ownership, or other logical features.

1.3. Project Components

The SHR project includes residential uses, public and private recreational uses, open space, and utilities and public services improvements. These uses are summarized in **Table 1-1, Land Use Summary**. Details of each component follow the table. Refer also to **Figure 1-2A, Illustrative Site Plan**, and **Figure 1-2B, Specific Plan Map**.

Table 1-1. Land Use Summary

Use	Acres
Residential Uses	
Neighborhood R-1: 118 units ¹	41.8
Neighborhood R-2: 119 units	47.4
Neighborhood R-3: 87 units	53.5
Neighborhood R-4: 49 units	31.7
Neighborhood R-5: 61 units	26.5
Neighborhood E-1: 47 units ¹	64.7
Neighborhood E-2: 69 units	61.3
Other Uses	
Fire Station	1.9
Private Recreation Area	5.0 (pad); 7,500 SF Building; Pools, Tennis Courts ¹
Drainage Basins	10 locations, acreage TBD at final engineering
Public Trails	7.3 (9.3 linear miles)
Private Streets	66.8
Private HOA Parks & Tot Lot	1.0
Resource Open Space	629.09
HOA-Managed Open Space	128.6

Source: Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan 2017

¹ "R" = Residential; "E" = Estate; SF = Square Feet

1.3.1. Residential Uses

The project proposes future development of 550 single-family residences on lots ranging from approximately 8,000 square feet to over 200,000 square feet.

As designed, the SHR project proposes to cluster development on-site into seven neighborhoods, referred to as Planning Areas and designated as R-1 to R-5 (Residential Neighborhoods) and E-1 to E-2 (Estate Neighborhoods). Average lot size in the neighborhoods would range from an estimated 15,440 square feet (R-1) to 59,997 square feet (E-1). Overall, average lot size would be approximately 27,245 square feet, or 0.63 acres. Maximum allowed height for the residentially zoned areas would be 35 feet, inclusive of any chimneys or other architectural features. Homes would be designed to be 28 feet in height to the top of the roofline.

Each proposed Planning Area is briefly described below (see [Figure 1-1B, Sphere of Influence Study Areas](#)). Refer to the Safari Highlands Ranch Specific Plan for additional discussion.

- R-1:** R-1 is planned for the southern portion of the site, west of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The neighborhood is planned for approximately 41.8 acres and would include 118 residential lots with an average lot size of approximately 15,440 square feet (ranging from 8,050 to 57,397 square feet). The main access would be from Safari Highlands Ranch Road, with a second access linking to R-2 to the north. A private neighborhood park would be provided for residents.
- R-2:** R-2 is planned for the south-central part of the site, west of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The neighborhood would be approximately 47.4 acres and would include 119 lots with an average lot size of 17,353 square feet (ranging from 7,663 to 103,143 square feet). The main access would be from Safari Highlands Ranch Road, with a secondary access linking to R-1 to the south. The Planning Area would include a neighborhood park with a trailhead providing a link to the proposed on-site trail system. A second trailhead is planned near R-2, off Safari Highlands Ranch Road.
- R-3:** R-3 is planned for the central portion of the site, east of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The neighborhood would be approximately 53.5 acres and would include 87 lots with an average area of 28,317 square feet (ranging from 9,039 to 81,996 square feet). Access would be from two points along Safari Highlands Ranch Road.
- R-4:** R-4 is planned in the northern portion of the site, east of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The neighborhood would be approximately 31.7 acres and would include 49 lots with an average lot size of 28,168 square feet (ranging from 11,647 to 64,034 square feet). Access would be from two points along Safari Highlands Ranch Road.
- R-5:** R-5 is planned for the north-central portion of the site, west of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The neighborhood would be approximately 26.5 acres in size and would include 61 lots with an average lot size of 18,891 square feet (ranging from 10,796 to 60,507 square feet). A single access would be from Safari Highlands Ranch Road. One neighborhood park is planned, including a main trailhead.

- E-1:** E-1 is planned for the northwestern portion of the site, west of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The neighborhood would be approximately 64.7 acres and would include 47 lots with an average lot size of 60,000 square feet (ranging from 42,545 to 155,265 square feet). Access would be via a single point along Safari Highlands Ranch Road. A small neighborhood park, trails, and a trail view point are part of the neighborhood.
- E-2:** E-2 is planned for the northeastern portion of the site, to the west, north, and east of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The neighborhood would be approximately 61.3 acres and would include 69 residential estate lots with an average lot size of 38,726 square feet (ranging from 21,766 to 157,560 square feet). A neighborhood park, trails, and a trail view point are planned.

To ensure that the site-specific solutions are implemented for the SHR site, new draft zoning standards and design guidelines are being prepared in the form of a Specific Plan to respond to the project's specific setting. As proposed by the project applicant, the Specific Plan will consist of new zoning standards and design guidelines which provide a framework for requiring the development to be context sensitive and be appropriately sited, scaled, and designed to be compatible with surrounding land uses.

The Specific Plan would regulate passive and active open space, site density, lot size, percent building coverage allowance, and building setbacks through clustered development. Not only do cluster developments help preserve open space, they also tend to minimize potential visual impacts that may be associated with development, reduce the cost of building and maintaining public roads, and decrease grading in environmentally sensitive areas.

Parks/Trails/Pathways

Figure 1-3, Proposed Parks, Trails, and Walks, shows the proposed public and private parks and trail system. Overall, the SHR project proposes approximately 9.3 miles (7.3 acres) of on-site trails available to the public. An interconnected series of walkways and trails is proposed to provide connection between the residential neighborhoods, as well as to the Village Core, recreational amenities, and other areas of the development. The proposed on-site trail system would connect from Rockwood Road through the project and would traverse the resource open space and provide links throughout the community for residents and the public. Connection to a number of preexisting rural pathways, dirt roads, and utility easements would be constructed. All neighborhoods would be interconnected through the proposed community trail system so that residents and the public can have access through the surrounding open space lands via preexisting rural pathways, dirt roads, and utility easements.

The public trail system would include both a north/south and an east/west trail component that would follow the alignment of Safari Highlands Ranch Road from Rockwood Road in the southwest to neighborhood E-2 in the north. This walkway would be available for public use and would be available to connect to other off-site public trails (in the future). A trail for public use is also proposed to lead from the Village Core to the west.

Unpaved trails would be located on existing dirt trails in the open space areas, while compacted decomposed granite walkways would be installed along on-site streets in neighborhoods E-1 and E-2. The conceptual design for the public trails includes five vista/viewpoints that would feature view-based destinations along the trails.

Private Amenities and Recreational Open Space

Private amenities for use by residents of the SHR project include parks, tot lots, trails, and a community recreation facility. This facility would be located in the Village Core (refer to **Figure 1-2A, Illustrative Site Plan**) and would likely include such amenities as a pool, tennis courts, barbecue and picnic area, indoor clubhouse, activity room, TV room, kitchen, restrooms, changing rooms, gym, and other rooms supporting activities such as group exercise, table tennis, and/or pool tables.

Additionally, six private pocket parks are proposed throughout the interior of the site. The private parks may include tot lots, barbecue areas, turf grass, trailhead elements, bench seating, trellis overheads, parking, dog play areas, and/or other amenities based on size and need. These parks would include on-street vehicle parking areas and would be linked to sidewalks and trails for those who wish to arrive on foot from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The combined acreage of the Recreational Open Space and trail system is 13.3 acres.

Resource Open Space

The SHR project would preserve approximately 629.09 acres of on-site open space (or 57.3 percent of the property) for the purpose of resource protection, including sensitive habitats and species, cultural resources, topographic features and rock outcroppings, and visual resources (see **Figure 1-5, Proposed Resource Open Space**). The proposed resource open space runs the length of the project site's western boundary, with the exception of the main entry, thereby preserving connectivity with adjacent undeveloped lands and open space.

A restrictive conservation easement will be recorded on the property to prohibit future development in the on-site resource open space. Activities would be restricted to resource management, emergency response, and other approved research activities as specified in the County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (refer to **Section 2.3, Biological Resources**). Because Safari Highlands Ranch would be included in the MSCP area, the project applicant is required to prepare and implement a Resource Management Plan (RMP), subject to approval by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the City of Escondido.

The RMP will identify requirements for long-term management of the resource open space, including periodic surveys, monitoring of trails crossing the open space, fence and signage repair, removal of invasive species, and reporting to regulatory agencies. Financing and long-term management of the resource open space would be the responsibility of either the homeowners association (HOA) or an approved nonprofit conservancy through deed of title.

HOA-Managed Habitat Open Space

In addition to the approximately 629.09 acres of conserved open space, there will be an additional 128.6 acres of native habitat that will be managed by the HOA. This habitat will consist of a native plant palette and revegetation that will include a palette including oaks, California sagebrush and prickly pear cactus to serve as additional habitat for the California gnatcatcher and cactus wren and that will buffer the resource open space from any edge effects from the development. Additionally, this area will be thinned annually, as designated in the Fire Protection Plan, to prevent excessive fuels from developing.

Fire Station

A fire station would be constructed on an approximately 1.9-acre site near the southern entrance to the SHR project site. It is anticipated that the fire station would include three vehicle (e.g., fire truck) parking bays, office space, a public reception room, staging areas, storage, living quarters for on-call staff, a gym, and a conference room. Parking would be provided at the station to accommodate emergency staff and would be made available for public use as well.

The fire station is anticipated to be staffed by the City of Escondido Fire Department. However, the City will explore various staffing options (both now and in the future) to ensure optimal resource allocations and service valuations.

Eagle Crest Golf Course Modifications

Hole #14 of the Eagle Crest Golf Course will be reconstructed by the applicant to allow for the alignment of Safari Highlands Ranch Road, which is the primary access to the SHR site. Hole #14 would be professionally designed by a golf course architect and would integrate mounding and landscape features to minimize the noise and visual impact of the roadway improvements on neighboring homes along the alignment.

1.3.2. Access and Circulation

To provide site access, the project requires construction of the proposed Safari Highlands Ranch Road. The new road would intersect with the existing Rockwood Road and would extend between Old Ranch Road and Vistamonte Avenue.

All newly constructed roads would be private. Safari Highlands Ranch Road would serve as the primary artery through the proposed development area. Access to this road would be gated beyond the Village Core. Because Safari Highlands Ranch Road is a private road, the road standards may vary from the public road standards adopted by the City. However, all private road designs must still be approved by the City of Escondido Engineering Department in accordance with the road standards proposed in the Specific Plan which abide by the AASHTO standards.

A series of traffic calming measures have been proposed for Safari Highlands Ranch Road to mitigate the potential for excessive speeds on sections of the steepest grade and curves. The Traffic Calming Concept Plans are illustrated in Figures III-17 and III-18 of the Specific Plan and generally consist of signage, striping, traffic calming medians, narrowing of streets, and electronic radar “Your Speed” alert signs.

Safari Highlands Ranch Road would be constructed to accommodate two 21-foot-wide travel lanes, bike lanes, a pedestrian path, and landscaping; refer to **Figure 1-6, Representative Street Sections**.

Other proposed on- and off-site roadway and circulation improvements include:

- Reconstruct and improve the intersection of Rockwood Road and the proposed Safari Highlands Ranch Road.

- Install a traffic signal at the intersection of Rockwood Road and Cloverdale Road, and restripe the westbound approach to provide one left turn lane and one shared left turn/right turn lane.
- Restripe southbound Cloverdale Road to provide an additional receiving lane from Rockwood Road left turning movements.
- Construct a raised median or a secondary westbound thru lane along Rockwood Road between Cloverdale Road and San Pasqual Union Elementary School, improving operations along this segment from LOS D to LOS B.
- Prohibit southbound left turns from Citrus Avenue to eastbound San Pasqual Valley Road (SR 78). Construct a right turn only out of Citrus Avenue.
- San Pasqual Valley Road (SR 78)/Summit Drive - Mitigation measures for proposed intersection modifications are subject to Caltrans Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) policy. Alternative intersection designs may be considered and evaluated by Caltrans. This intersection may be either a traffic signal or a roundabout at Caltrans' sole discretion.
- San Pasqual Valley Road (SR 78)/Cloverdale Road/San Pasqual Road – Widen the eastbound approach of San Pasqual Valley Road to provide dual left turn lanes and widen and restripe the northbound section of Cloverdale Road north of the intersection to provide an approximately 650-foot-long receiving lane and a 150-foot-long transition lane to improve traffic flows onto northbound Cloverdale Road.
- Signalize the intersection of San Pasqual Road/Sierra Linda Drive/Ryan Drive pursuant to the City's request.
- Segment of Felicita Avenue/17th Avenue: Escondido Boulevard to Juniper Street - The project should pay a fair-share toward the City of Escondido Capital Improvement Project: Felicita Avenue and Juniper Street from Escondido to Chestnut Street widening project.
- Segment of Felicita Avenue/17th Avenue from Juniper Street to San Pasqual Valley Road – Restripe/widen the eastbound lane to provide an eastbound right turn pocket at Lendee Drive and extend the two-way left turn lane eastward to the City of Escondido/San Diego County boundary.
- Segment of Via Rancho Parkway from San Pasqual Road to Beethoven Drive – Lengthen the southbound right turn pocket to extend it an additional 50 feet approaching Beethoven Drive.
- Construct two gated emergency access roads, one connecting to Stonebridge Road in the north and one connecting to Zoo Road in the south.

San Pasqual Union School is situated approximately 0.5 mile west of the project site on Rockwood Road. The project applicant has contacted the school administrators and the school community and proposed several conceptual design improvements to address existing traffic congestion and parking issues along the school's Rockwood Road frontage during peak pick-up and drop-off times. However, at the time of EIR preparation, and although the original architect of the school has prepared phased plans for improvement to pick-up/drop-off and

parking, no specific improvements have been agreed to, and accordingly such improvements are not proposed as part of the project application.

While the school is located along the main access road to the project site (Rockwood Road), circulation improvements for the school are not required for development of the project, either as part of project access or as mitigation for an identified traffic or safety impact. Refer to **Section 2.12, Traffic and Circulation**, for additional discussion.

1.3.3. Utilities

Water

Upon annexation to the City of Escondido, public water service would be provided by the City of Escondido. Waterline and storage upgrades are required to supply water to the project and would be funded by the project applicant. Water utilities would include connection to the City's public water system via extension of an existing pipeline from Rockwood Road, at the intersection of Safari Highlands Ranch Road, to the site, pumps to boost water to an on-site water reservoir (storage tank), and an internal water distribution system that would use pumps, reducing stations, and gravity feed for distribution to the proposed on-site land uses. Refer to **Section 2.13, Utilities and Service Systems**, for specific details regarding proposed improvements for the provision of water service.

An on-site water reservoir is proposed to ensure that adequate supplies are available at all times to serve the project. The reservoir would be designed in conformance with the City of Escondido 2012 Water Master Plan (June 2012). The storage tank would have a capacity of approximately 743,000 gallons and would be approximately 32 feet in height and approximately 58 feet in diameter. Additionally, the storage tank would be painted a muted color to help it blend in to its surroundings. A pump station is also required to convey a flow equal to that of the maximum daily demand plus fire flow recharge over a period of three days.

To reduce the use of potable water for purposes of common area irrigation, the project would tie into the City's recycled water system via connection to a future existing pipeline located in Cloverdale Road (near Rockwood Road) and convey recycled water to the project site via a new dedicated recycled water line. The expansion is part of the City's Phase 1 Recycled Water Master Plan Improvements and would make recycled water available for the first time to other properties along Rockwood Road.

Construction of an on-site recycled water pump station would be required to pump water up to the higher zones of the subject property. Land area in the northern portion of the site would be reserved with the project to allow the City to provide recycled water storage (i.e., wet-weather storage), if desired in the future. The recycled water storage facility would be filled during periods of wet weather, and the water would be used when recycled water demands increase following rain events.

The system would be extended on-site to allow the provision of reclaimed water for use in irrigating project landscaping within the Village Core, roadway rights-of-way, and homeowners association-maintained common areas throughout the project site, including Zone 1 fuel modification areas. Potable water demands would be further minimized through the use of

water-efficient landscape plantings in both private yards and common open space areas. Recycled water via the proposed connection would also be used during the grading and construction phases.

Additionally, rainwater harvesting hook-ups are proposed to be offered at all homes for use by residents. Water would generally be captured during the rainy season and stored for use in landscaping during dry periods. Storage would be in the form of rain barrels or tanks installed either above or below ground.

Sewer

Upon annexation to the City, wastewater treatment for the project would be provided by the City of Escondido. The project includes improvements to the City's sewer system to ensure it operates at design criteria and would provide new sewer lines to connect to the City's existing facilities in Rockwood Road. The existing sewer system consists of an 8-inch gravity sewer line that extends to the Rancho San Pasqual and Rancho Vistamonte communities and connects to a 12-inch gravity sewer line that extends from Rockwood Road south along the creek, under San Pasqual Valley Road/State Route 78, and south to near Old Pasqual Road where it discharges to Lift Station 13. The applicant would be responsible for upgrading Lift Station 13 to its design capacity in order to accommodate the flows from SHR.

From Lift Station 13, flows are ultimately conveyed to the City owned and operated Hale Avenue Resource Recovery Facility (HARRF), located at 1521 S. Hale Avenue, for processing. All existing and proposed gravity sewers would be designed to convey peak dry weather flows in accordance with the City of Escondido 2012 Wastewater Master Plan (June 2012); refer to **Section 2.13, Utilities and Service Systems**, for specific details regarding the proposed improvements for the provision of sewer service.

Storm Water Facilities

The project includes a drainage network designed to control and filter storm water runoff in conformance with the requirements of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the City of Escondido. The proposed storm water system would include the use of biofilters, on-site storage of storm water in basins with outlets that regulate the flow rate and duration of storm water released, and the use of both retention and detention basins to slow and sequester runoff.

Improvements for the management of storm water would also include construction of several roadway undercrossings that would adequately convey peak runoff via boxed culverts. These culverts would also help ensure that wildlife movement through the site is maintained. Refer to **Section 2.8, Hydrology and Water Quality**, for specific details regarding the proposed improvements to address storm water flows.

1.4. Construction Information and Phasing

Construction Phasing

Construction of the residential units will occur in seven phases, corresponding to the seven neighborhoods being proposed. Phases are numbered from 1 through 7, with Phase 1 being

associated with Planning Area (PA) R-1, Phase 2 with PA R-2, etc. Over the lifetime of the project, the phasing plan may change due to market conditions and other factors. Numbering of the phases is therefore for ease of reference only.

Depending on the market at the time development of each phase is undertaken, construction of the individual phases may overlap, so that the available inventory of residential lots is able to meet market demands. However, it is anticipated that the project would be phased over a 5- to 6-year period, with construction commencing, upon approval of the final map, approximately 2 years after City approval of the Tentative Map, certification of the EIR, and LAFCO approval of annexation of the project site into the City of Escondido.

The phasing plan for the project will provide for logical development of public services commensurate with need. A conceptual plan for the logical extension of infrastructure is provided in **Figure 1-2C, Conceptual Plan for Extension of Public Services**. It is anticipated these improvements would be built in four major construction phases. The phasing plan may be modified, provided it can be shown that modifications are in conformance with the provisions of the SHR Specific Plan and that all required public improvements and applicable mitigation measures will be provided at time of need as determined by the City engineer. Development of each phase would be coordinated so that public facilities and services are available and ready to serve the proposed land uses as the need arises.

The first phase of land development would involve construction of Safari Highlands Ranch Road, all infrastructure required for the phase (streets, sidewalks, utilities, drainage facilities, landscaping, etc.), the private recreational building and amenities, and approximately 237 residential units. Grading for the first phase would take approximately 5-6 months. Construction traffic will enter the site from multiple entrance points in order to lessen the impact to any single roadway. Once mobilized, all heavy machinery would remain on-site until construction is complete. Staging for all equipment and construction personnel would occur on-site within the approved limits of grading.

Cut from Phase 1 development area would be placed as fill where required to allow construction of Safari Highlands Ranch Road. Wet utilities would be installed in the first land development phase, consisting of sewer, domestic water, recycled water, storm drains, and improvements for hydromodification and flood attenuation. Sewer and recycled water mains would be installed from Cloverdale Road in Rockwood Road, extending to Safari Highlands Ranch Road. Improvements may also be installed at existing Lift Station 13 to increase conveyance capacity. A potable water pump station, capable of producing required fire flows, and a recycled water pump station would also be installed in Phase 1. Dry utilities would be installed extending from existing dry utility transformers in Rockwood Road to each residential lot proposed. All street paving, curb, and gutter improvements, along with all public trails, would be constructed subsequent to installation of the wet utilities.

Additionally, off-site traffic improvements would be completed, including construction of a median in Rockwood Road, installation of a traffic signal at the Cloverdale Road/Rockwood Road and the SR 78/Citrus intersections, re-signaling and addition of a turn lane on SR 78, and construction of a receiving lane on Cloverdale Road. All other improvements identified in the traffic impact analysis prepared by Linscott, Law & Greenspan (**Appendix 2.12**) would also be constructed as part of Phase 1.

Phase 2 would include the construction of 87 homes. Development would include grading and construction of all infrastructure required (streets, sidewalks, utilities, drainage facilities, landscaping, etc.). Upon issuance of the 275th Certificate of Occupancy for the project, the Fire Station, the potable water tank (approximately 743,000 gallons), and grading and surface improvements for the northern emergency access road will have been completed. In addition, a 10,000-gallon water tank would be installed where the emergency access road enters/exits the site to allow water trucks to be filled on an as-needed basis. The HOA will be responsible for periodically checking the water tank and refilling it in the event it is depleted.

Phase 3 of the development would include the construction of 110 homes and all public trail systems proposed within this phase. Phase 4 would include the construction of 116 homes. Phasing would be timed to meet market demands.

Grading

Approximately 339 of the overall 1,098 acres of the site would be subject to grading to allow for the proposed project. Grading would take approximately 18 months if the proposed development phases are graded concurrently. The time required to complete the grading operations for Phase 1 is estimated to be approximately five to six months. If grading is phased due to market conditions, grading for each phase may take up to six months.

Clearing and grubbing operations would occur as needed ahead of grading operations. However, to the extent feasible, existing vegetation would be left in place for dust control purposes.

Total grading quantities for the project are estimated at 4,625,930 cubic yards (c.y.). Phase 1 would consist of approximately 1,965,840 c.y. of raw cut; refer to **Figure 1-2C**. Phases 2, 3, and 4 would consist of an estimated 840,880 c.y.; 722,620 c.y.; and, 1,096,590 c.y. of raw cut, respectively. No off-haul of material would occur, as all earth would be redistributed (i.e., “balanced”) on the site. However, some borrowing from the Phase 2 area would be required to achieve design grades for Phase 1.

Cut slopes are proposed at a maximum ratio of 1.5:1 (horizontal to vertical); fill slopes are proposed at a maximum ratio of 2:1. Project grading would use both contour grading and terracing techniques to reduce overall grading and to minimize the visual effects of manufactured slopes. Following construction, all graded slopes would be planted for erosion control, and manufactured slopes would be landscaped in accordance with an approved landscape plan. Retaining walls, where required, would also be designed to minimize visual impacts. Large slopes would be supported and retained with geogrid or retaining walls, and would be landscaped so that the slopes blend with the existing native vegetation such that manufactured slopes would appear natural in shape and appearance. However, specific design details of any retaining walls proposed for the development would be determined during final engineering for the project. Refer also to the SHR Specific Plan, provided as **Appendix 1.1**.

Blasting may also be required in certain areas on-site to prepare the property for development. Although the precise amount of blasting required is unknown at this time, due to the hardness of on-site materials, a significant amount (estimated 50 percent) of the overall cut slopes would likely require some amount of blasting. If blasting is required, verification of a San Diego

County Explosives Permit and a copy of the blaster's public liability insurance policy must be filed with the Fire Chief and the City Engineer prior to the commencement of any blasting activities. This would be made a condition of approval for the project. Rock crushing would also be required to process rock removed with project grading and blasting activities in order to reduce the material for engineered fill.

Sustainability and Energy-Saving Features

The proposed project would meet or exceed 2016 Title 24 energy efficiency requirements, resulting in homes that are approximately 20+ percent more energy efficient than homes constructed prior to January 1, 2017. Homeowners would also have the option to upgrade to advanced water recycling systems, water-recycling dishwashers, "greywater" heat recovery systems, efficient air ventilation and purification systems, and/or "fuel forward" garages with electric vehicle chargers for electric and hybrid vehicles or CNG fueling stations for natural gas-powered cars. Additionally, all homes are proposed to be pre-wired for optional installation of solar panels.

Other energy-saving features incorporated into the proposed development are anticipated to include drought-tolerant landscaping; low water and recycled water irrigation systems; and bike lanes, bike racks, and bus stops. Refer to **Section 2.6, Greenhouse Gas Emissions**, for additional discussion.

1.5. Sphere of Influence Update

A Sphere of Influence is a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency as determined and authorized by one of the state's 57 Local Agency Formation Commissions. The City of Escondido's SOI was initially adopted by San Diego LAFCO in 1979.

In 2003, LAFCO reaffirmed the current SOI as part of the North Central San Diego County Municipal Service Review (MSR) and SOI Update. Since that time, discussions have taken place between LAFCO and the City with regard to updating the SOI boundary to both add and remove certain lands. The lands being considered are described below. It should be noted that Candidate Study Area 1, the SHR site, is described above and is therefore not discussed below. Refer to **Figure 1-1B, Sphere of Influence Study Areas**, for locations of the Candidate Study Areas. All of the Candidate Study Areas are currently included in the City's General Plan.

Candidate Study Area 2: Beacon Sun Ranch (APNs 240-120-12; 240-250-03; 240-251-04, 05, -06 and -07; 233.38 acres)

Beacon Sun Ranch is a 471-acre property located west of Safari Highland Ranch. Approximately 262 acres (55 percent) are within the existing City limits. The remaining 209 acres (45 percent) are currently in an unincorporated area and extend beyond the adopted City SOI. The property is currently a commercial avocado ranch. The SHR project includes an emergency access road that extends through the existing Stonebridge Road/Old Guejito Grade Road on the Beacon Sun Ranch property and connects to Meadowcreek Lane. This Candidate Study Area would be annexed into the City of Escondido under separate application.

Candidate Study Area 3: Remainder of SPA 4 (APNs 240-270-32; 242-010-04, -27, -29, 32, -33, and -35; 242-020-33, -34, -50, -63, -67, -68, -69, and -70; 254.74 acres)

These lands represent the remaining unincorporated 255 acres in Specific Plan Area 4 (SPA 4) not designated as Rancho Vistamonte or Safari Highlands Ranch. These lands occur in two locations. The first area consists of an approximately 40.55-acre parcel to the east of and near the northern boundary of the SHR site. The second area comprises 14 parcels located adjacent to the southeast corner of the SHR site. If the SHR project is approved for development of 550 dwelling units as proposed, the remaining maximum balance of units available within SPA 4 would be 170. This density would be in exchange for on-site and/or off-site community benefits in addition to the project's impacts as permitted in the General Plan; however, no pending or anticipated development applications have been prepared for this study area.

Candidate Study Area 4: Northeastern Escondido (APNs 190-010-44 and 190-021-02; 128 acres)

The property comprises two parcels under City ownership. One parcel is approximately 83 acres located adjacent to the City's Municipal Firing Range. This parcel is currently designated as open space in the City's General Plan. The second parcel is approximately 45 acres, lies adjacent to the 83-acre parcel, and is currently undeveloped. No development is currently planned or pending for either parcel and the City does not anticipate any changes to the General Plan designation.

Candidate Study Area 5: Southwestern Escondido (APNs 235-032-01 through -15; 235-160-20; 235-040-35, -37, -38 and -39; 117.4 acres)

This study area includes land designated by the City for future development of a high quality business park (Escondido Research Technology Center/Harmony Grove Specific Plan Area 8), in addition to other adjacent parcels located east of Escondido Creek near Avenida del Diablo that are currently designated for residential use. Landowners in this area have expressed interest in annexing into the City. As part of the 2012 update to the City's General Plan, the City coordinated with residents in the unincorporated areas of Eden Valley and Harmony Grove to identify new policies that would address their concerns for future development of the area in order to ensure compatibility with regard to providing guidance for architectural and landscape design, building setbacks, and signage.

Candidate Study Area 6: Remnant Parcels Old Guejito Grade Road (APNs 240-050-06 and 240-050-12; 72.97 acres)

This study area comprises portions of two individual parcels that are bisected by the SOI boundary, a condition that is not generally supported by LAFCO. Based on discussions between City staff and LAFCO, the Study Area Map was adjusted to include the remainder of both parcels bisected by the SOI boundary. This adjustment would not affect the future development potential of either parcel.

Candidate Study Area 7: Possible SOI Reduction Areas (numerous parcels; 1,128.22 acres)

As part of the SOI update, LAFCO has requested that the City also consider whether certain land areas within the current SOI could potentially be removed. As such, the City evaluated certain properties located north of the City’s boundary and determined that the current SOI boundary does not always follow parcel lines, streets, or other logical features. Because it is unlikely that these lands would ever annex into the City, City staff has recommended evaluating such lands for a potential reduction of the SOI to create a more logical boundary.

1.6. Intended Uses of the EIR

This EIR is an informational document intended to inform public agency decision-makers and the public of significant environmental effects of the proposed project described above, identify ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe and evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the project.

The City of Escondido is the Lead Agency for the project, as it is the agency with primary authority over the project’s discretionary approvals. Several other agencies, identified as responsible and trustee agencies, will also use the EIR for their consideration of approvals or permits under their respective authorities. For the purpose of CEQA, the term “trustee agency” means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project, which are held in trust for the people of the state of California. The term “responsible agency” includes all public agencies other than a lead agency that may have discretionary actions associated with the implementation of the proposed project or an aspect of subsequent implementation of the project. Accordingly, **Table 1-2** identifies a list of approvals that are likely to be required from a lead agency, trustee agencies, and responsible agencies.

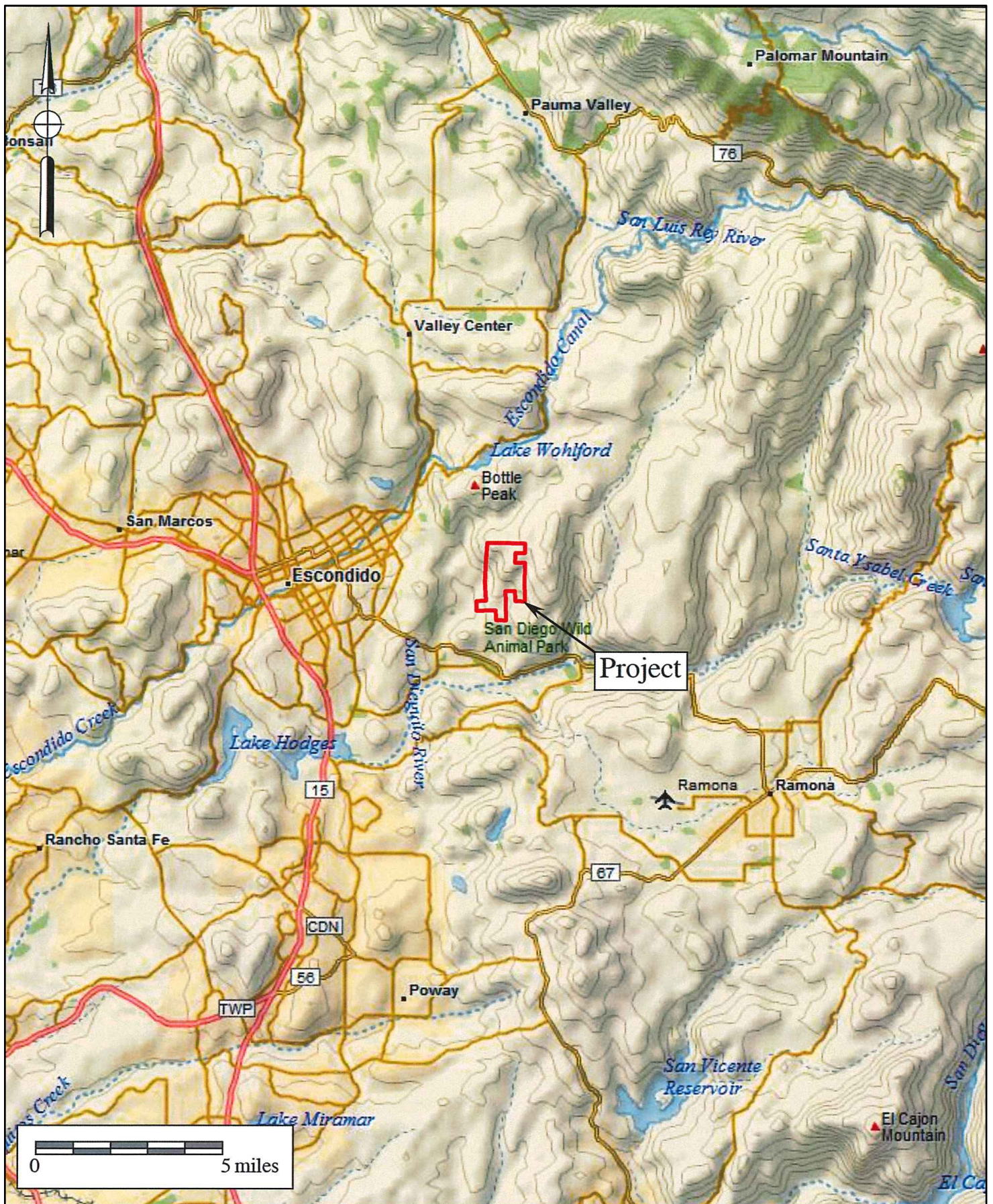
Table 1-2. Matrix of Required Approvals and Permits

Permit/Action Required	Approving Agency	Lead/Trustee/Responsible Agency Designation
Specific Plan Adoption	City of Escondido (City)	Lead Agency
Prezone SHR to Specific Plan	City	Lead Agency
Tentative Map	City	Lead Agency
Conceptual Landscape Plan	City	Lead Agency
Environmental Impact Report Certification	City	Lead Agency
Development Agreement	City	Lead Agency
Sphere of Influence (Expansion & Deletion)	San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)	Lead Agency/ Responsible Agency
Reorganization including annexation to the City of Escondido, and detachment from CSA 135 (SHR Only)	LAFCO	Lead Agency/Responsible Agency
Waste Discharge Permit	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)	Responsible Agency

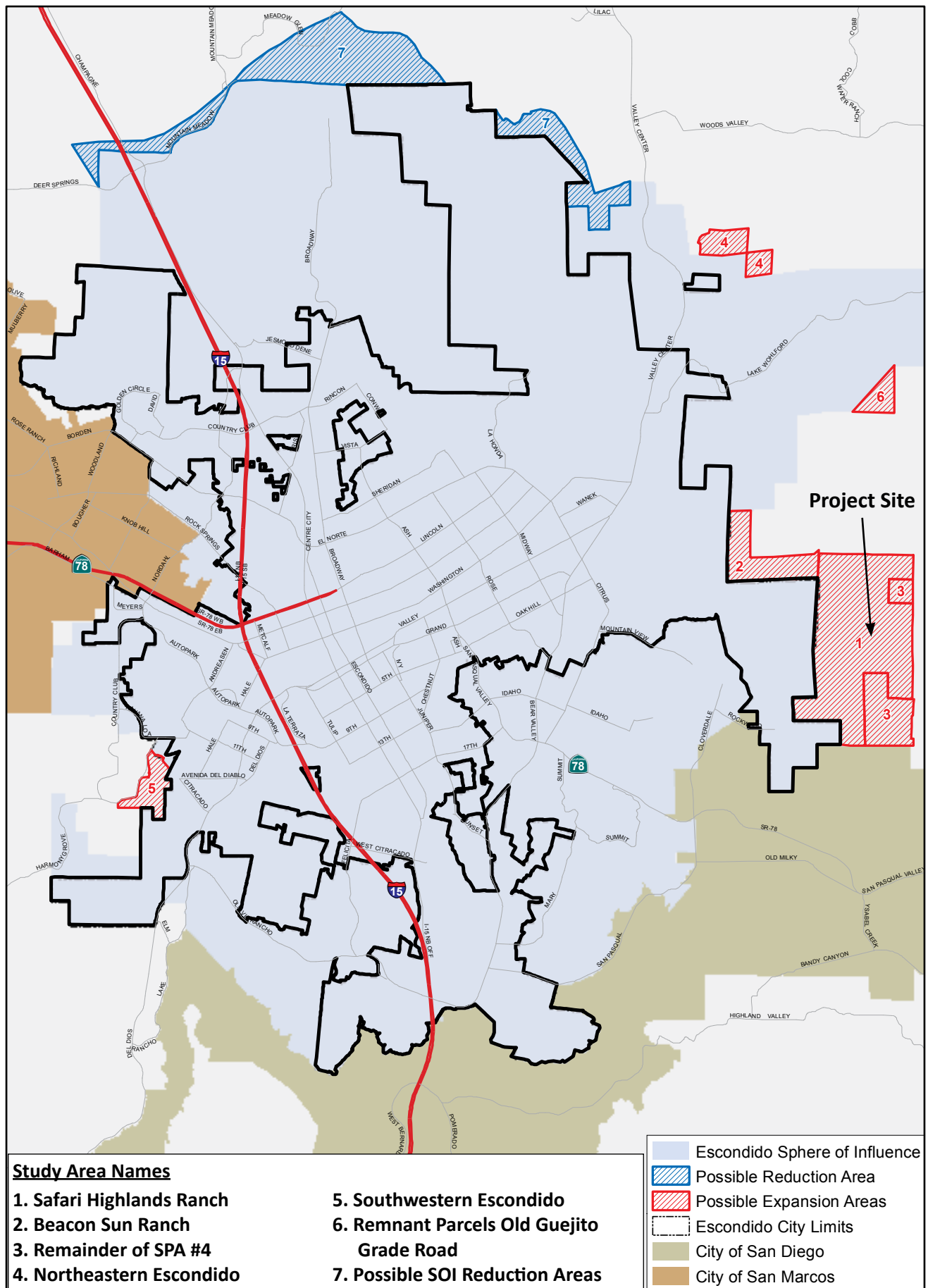
Table 1-2, continued

Permit/Action Required	Approving Agency	Lead/Trustee/Responsible Agency Designation
Streambed Alteration Agreement (Section 1603)	California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Trustee Agency
Clean Water Act Permit (Section 404)	US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Responsible Agency
Clean Water Act Permit (Section 401)	San Diego RWQCB	Responsible Agency
Construction Permit and/or Encroachment Permit	City/County of San Diego/California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	Lead Agency/Responsible Agencies
Storm Water Quality Management Plan	City	Lead Agency
Grading Permit(s)	City	Lead Agency
Improvement Plans	City	Lead Agency
General Construction Stormwater Permit	San Diego RWQCB	Responsible Agency
Annexation Agreement, Reassign MSCP/Incidental Take Permit	California and US Fish and Wildlife Agencies, San Diego County, City, LAFCO	Lead Agency (City)/Responsible Agencies (USFWS, LAFCO, SD County), Trustee Agency (CDFW)

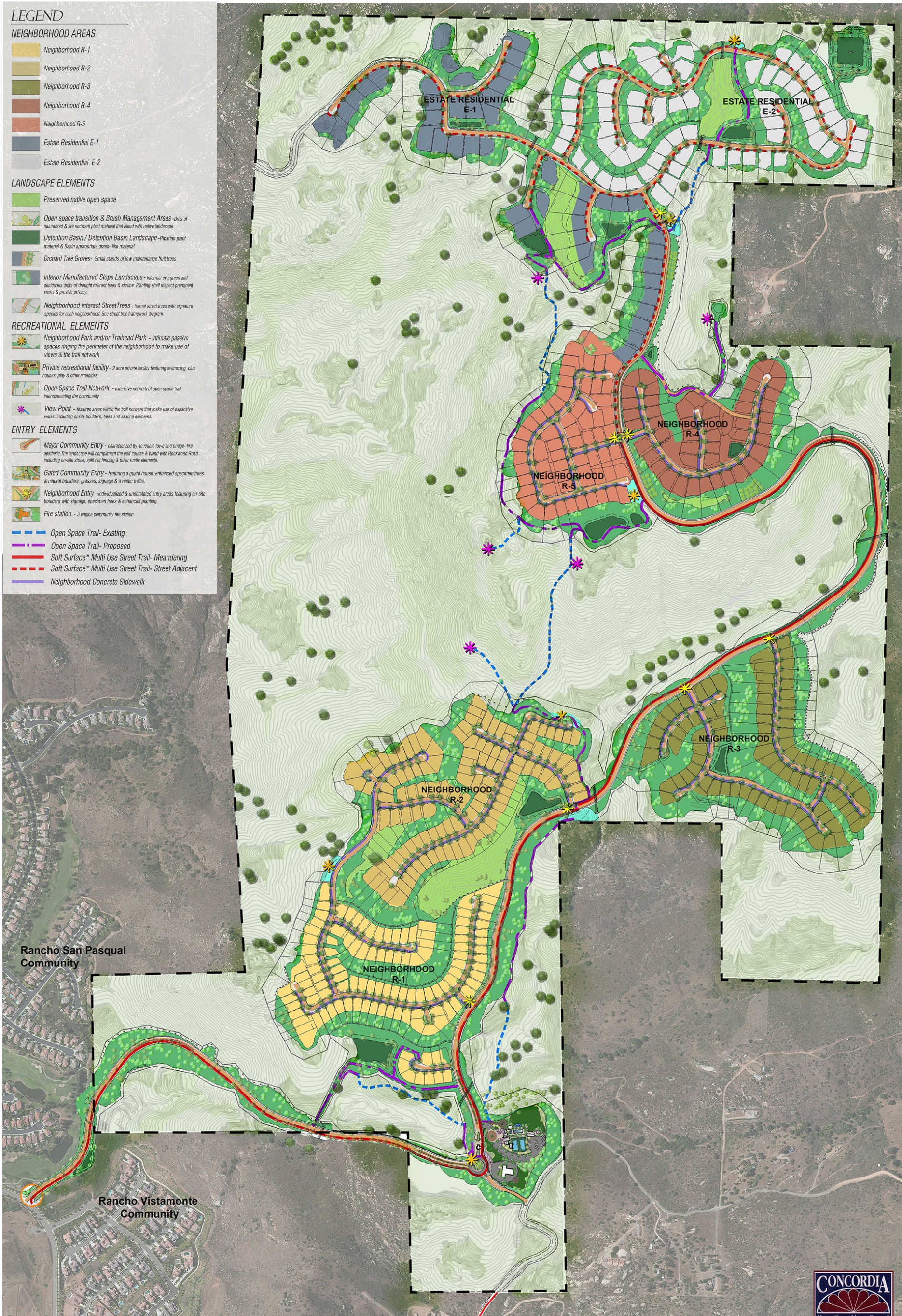
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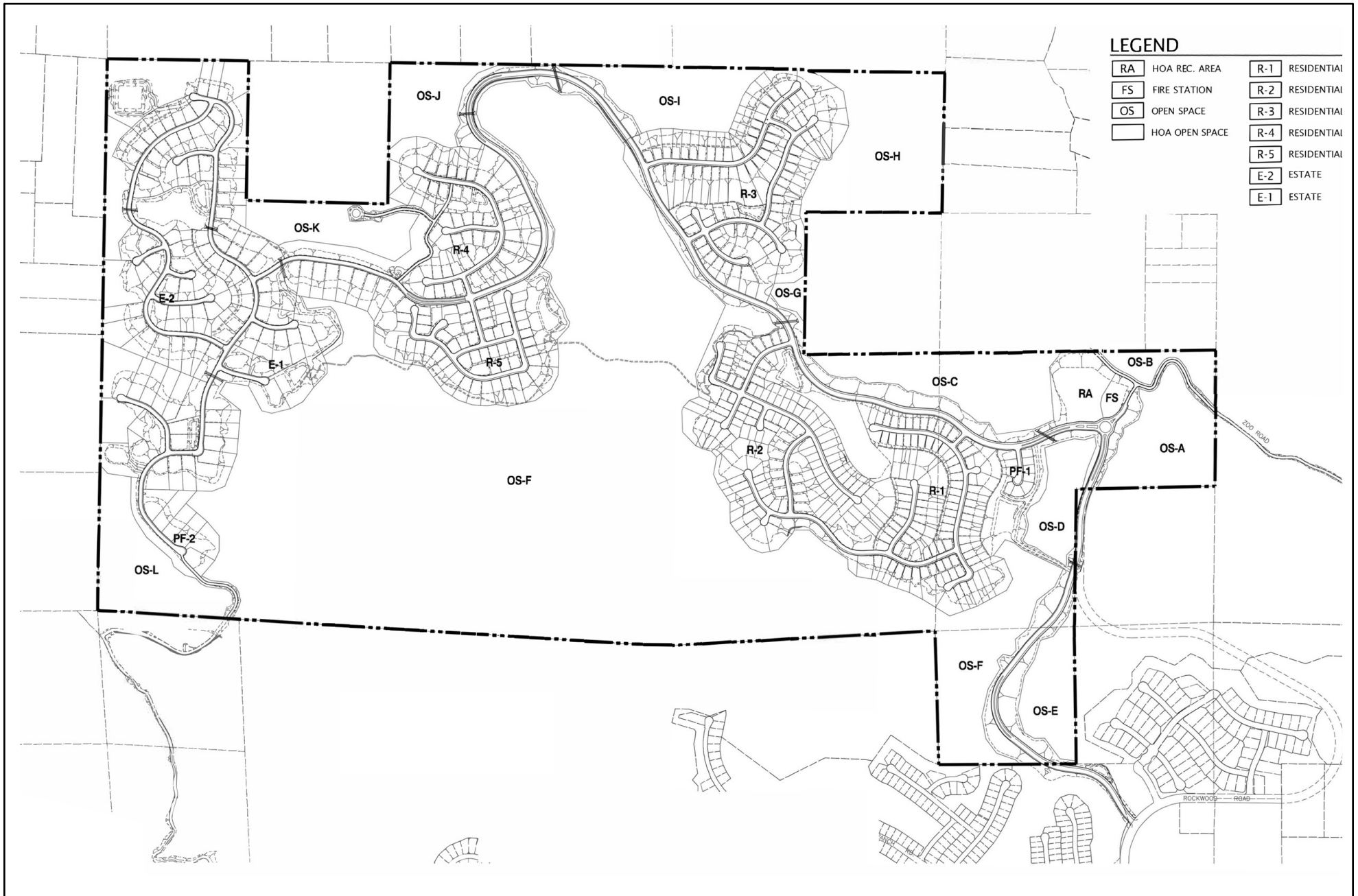
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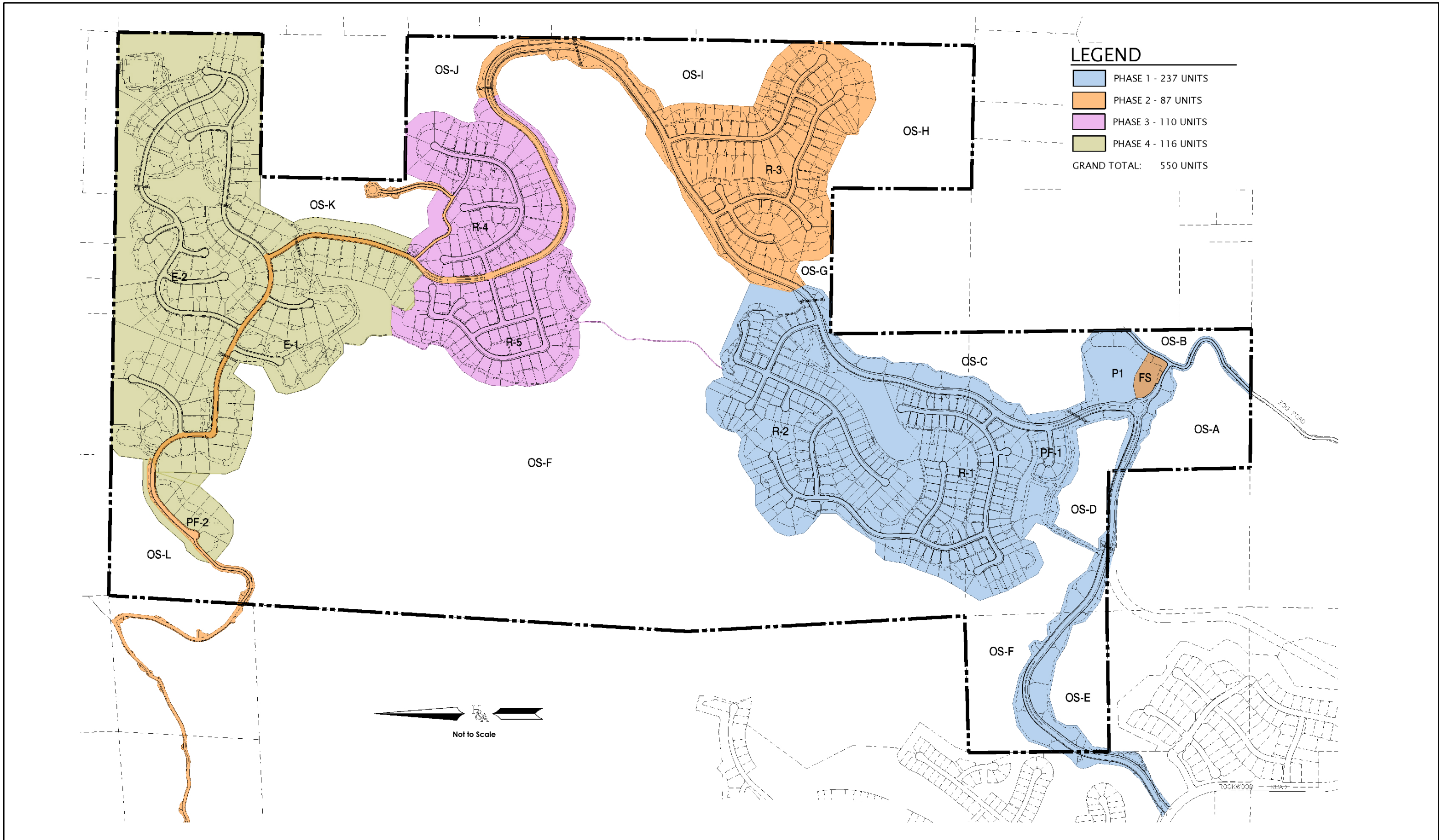
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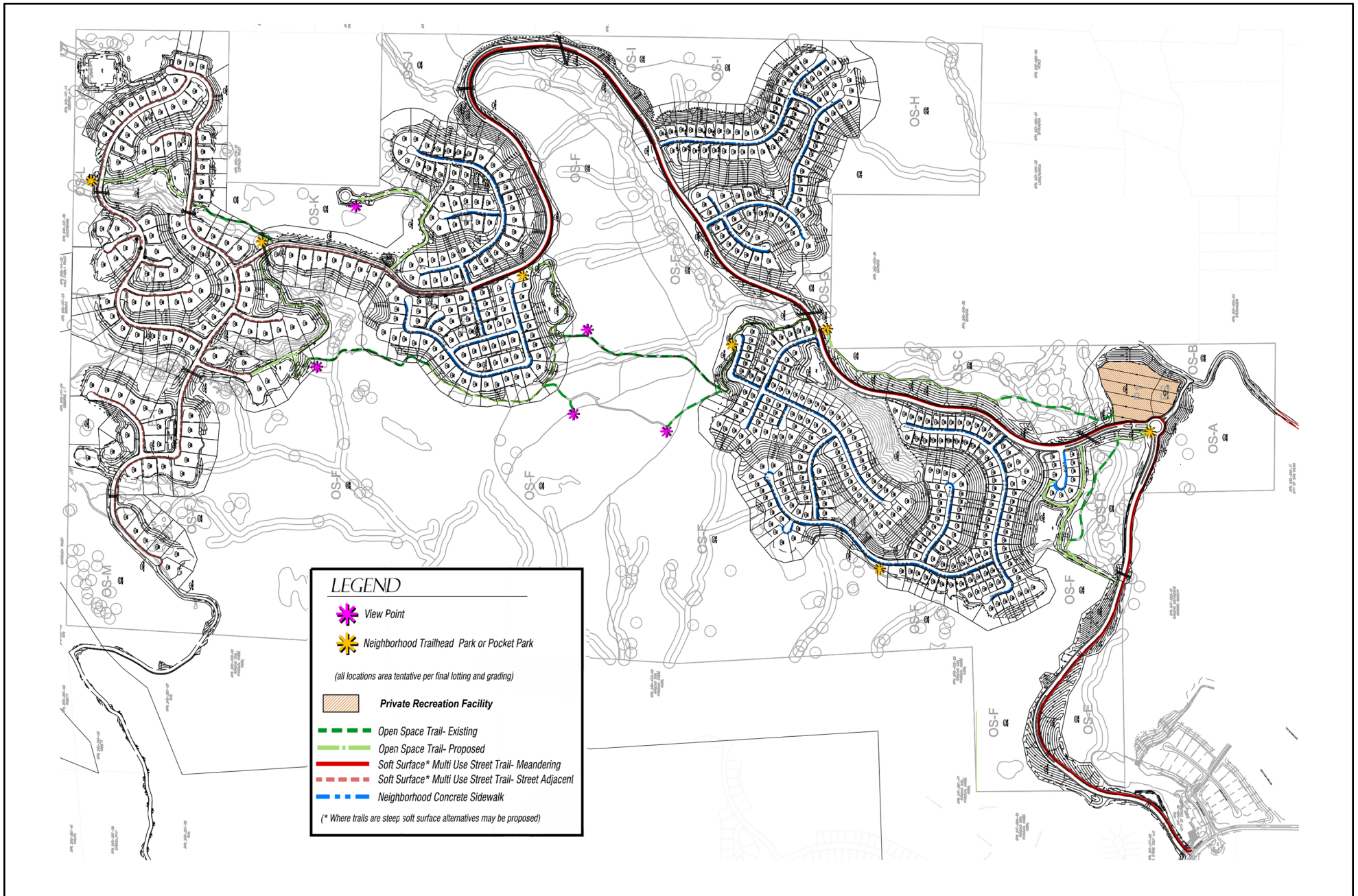
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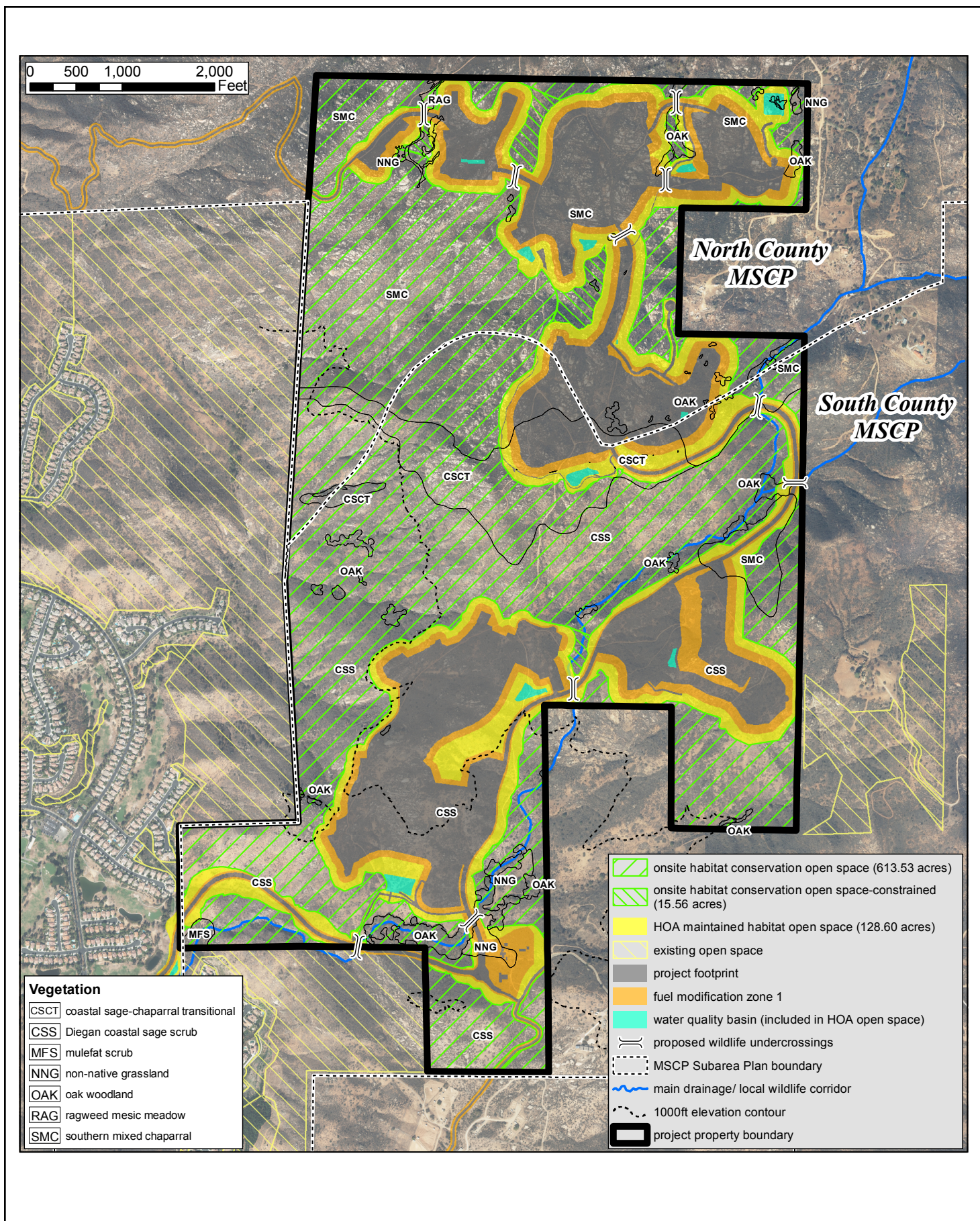


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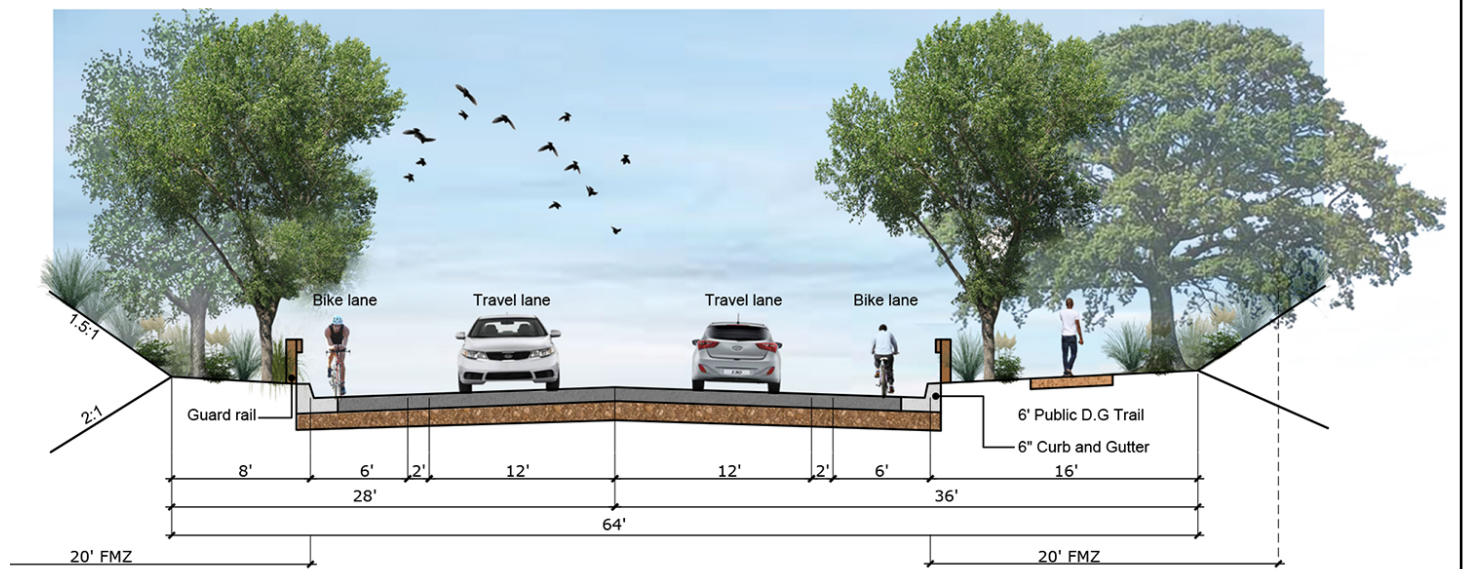
2 Acre Private HOA Recreational Building

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Project Monumental Signage | 12. Trellis Promenade or Arcade |
| 2. Gated Community Facility | 13. Private Indoor Event Space |
| 3. Enhanced Entry/ Drop-Off Area | 14. Clubhouse Facility (Community Room, Gym, Office etc.) |
| 4. Children's Discovery Play Area | 15. Tennis Pavilion |
| 5. Pool Restaurant/Shower Facility | 16. Tennis Courts |
| 6. Community Pool | 17. RV / Recreational Parking Lot |
| 7. Community Children's Pool | 18. Private Recreational Facility Parking Lot |
| 8. Community Spa | 19. Fire Station Facility |
| 9. Splash Pad | 20. Fire Station Parking |
| 10. Event Lawn | 21. Fire Station Recreational area |
| 11. Private Event Pavilion | 22. Open Lawn |

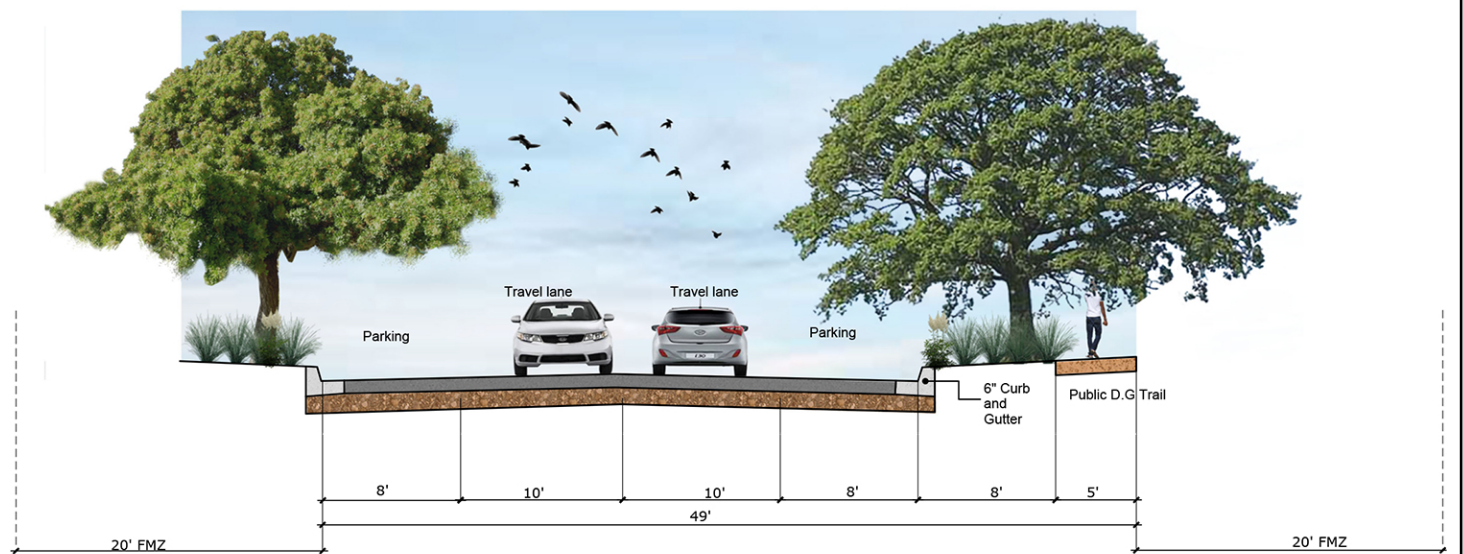
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PRIVATE COLLECTOR STREET



PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL STREET

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