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Planning Division
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April 21, 2014

TO: Interested Agencies

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Project Title: Oak Creek
Project Applicant: New Urban West, Inc.

The City of Escondido will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the project identified above. 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 potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study 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 Bill Martin, Principal Planner at the address shown below. We will need the name of a contact person in your agency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Martin".

Bill Martin
Principal Planner
City of Escondido Planning Division
201 North Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025
760 839-4557
bmartin@escondido.org



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
OAK CREEK RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
(SUB 13-0002)**

SUMMARY

The proposed project is a 65-lot Tentative Map for single-family residential development of a 41.4-acre property in conjunction with an annexation of the property from the County of San Diego to the City of Escondido (City). The site is located in the County's North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan, included in the County's 2012 General Plan Update, which designates the project site Village Residential and would allow 2.9 dwelling units per acre (2.9 du/ac). The City of Escondido General Plan designates the site as Estate II, which allows a maximum density of 2.0 du/ac. The project proposes 65 residential lots for an overall density of 1.57 du/ac. – less than what is allowed under the County's or City of Escondido's plan designations. Requisite project approvals include a Pre-zone to Planned Development, Tentative Map, Preliminary Development Plan, Master Development Plan, Precise Development Plan, Grading Exemption, Conditional Letter of Map Revision, Letter of Map Revision, and reorganization including annexation to the City of Escondido and detachment from County Service Area 135 (Regional Communications/Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services). Additionally, the reorganization includes annexation of the approximately 2.34 acre Chalice Unitarian Universalist Congregation into the City of Escondido. Both properties are within the City of Escondido's adopted Sphere of Influence. See attached Figures 1 and 2 showing the regional and vicinity location of the project site, respectively.

Under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its Guidelines, the City of Escondido is the Lead Agency for environmental review and must evaluate the potentially significant effects of the proposed project. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to assess the proposed project's effects on the environment, identify potentially significant impacts, and identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts.

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being circulated pursuant to California Resources Code Section 21153(a) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082. Public agencies and the public are invited to comment on the proposed scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR.

A 30-day comment period is provided to return written comments to the City. The comment period begins on April 24, 2014, and ends on May 23, 2014. All comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on May 23, 2014, and be directed to:

Bill Martin, Principal Planner
City of Escondido Planning Division
201 North Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025
Fax: (760) 839-4313
bmartin@escondido.org

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed project site is located in the unincorporated area of San Diego County immediately south of Escondido and within the City's Sphere of Influence. The 41.4-acre site currently contains a residential unit, agricultural uses (limited fields and support structures), open space, and a seasonal pond in the southwest corner of the site. Two drainages flow southerly through the project site and converge near the pond; a lined ditch also converges with the drainages. The site is generally surrounded by residential development to the north, west, and southeast, and by Felicita County Park to the southwest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would construct 65 single-family detached residences (Figure 3). The residential lots would encompass 22.49 acres of the site, with a minimum gross lot size of 10,690 square feet, an average gross lot size of approximately 15,070 square feet, and a maximum gross lot size of 33,338 square feet. The site is designated as Estate II by the Escondido General Plan (2012) which allows for up to 2 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Homes built on the site would be either one or two stories and would have attached garages. Sidewalks would be constructed along one side of the streets in the development with street lighting consisting of low light fixtures in compliance with the Escondido Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. In order to accomplish this development, the project proposes rezoning, in connection with the annexation described below, the project site to Planned Development – Residential 1.57 (allowing for 1.57 du/ac) and implementing clustering, a mechanism that enables smaller lot sizes to achieve flexibility and habitat preservation.

The project site is bounded by Felicita Road to the west and Hamilton Lane to the north. Both of these streets are designated as Local Collectors on the Circulation Element of the Escondido General Plan. The project proposes a specific alignment plan for both Felicita Road and Hamilton Lane which would establish modified pavement widths and improvements for both of these streets in conjunction with a traffic calming plan for the portion of Felicita Road that generally extends from Hamilton Lane south to Clarence Lane. Proposed improvements on Felicita Road include striping bike lanes on both sides of the street in the vicinity of the project, and constructing curb, gutter and sidewalk along the project site's frontage. The specific alignment plan also provides improvements on Hamilton Lane including street widening, curb, gutter and sidewalk, along the project site's frontage. Street widening, curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements also are proposed along the project site's frontage on Miller Avenue.

The project's proposed reorganization would annex the project site into to the City and detach from County Service Area #135 (Regional Communication/Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services) (Figure 4). Annexation enables public sewer service for the project, which is only available from the City of Escondido, and implements the City's General Plan which designates the subject property as Estate II. Annexation would require approval from the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and would include the 41.1-acre Oak Creek property proposed for residential development, the 2.34-acre Chalice Unitarian Universalist Congregation property located at 2324 Miller Avenue, and portions of adjacent roadways. The Congregation was included in the annexation as a result of a LAFCO-requested survey which indicated the Congregation desired to be annexed into the City of Escondido. In connection with the annexation, the proposed project would rezone the Congregation site to RE-20. Annexation of the Congregation site is included only as an accommodating measure and the Congregation property is not needed to successfully annex the 41.4 acre property associated with Oak Creek Residential Development. The Congregation operates pursuant to a

Major Use Permit, previously issued by The County of San Diego, which would remain valid after annexation without the City of Escondido requiring any changes to church facilities or operation.

The Oak Creek residential property is entirely within the Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District (RDDMWD). However, two of the parcels (238-110-25 & 35) located east of Miller Avenue are not within the boundaries of Improvement District 1 (ID 1). Annexation of those parcels to ID 1 will be subject to the approval of the RDDMWD District Board and a condition of LAFCO's approval of the reorganization.

The project would include the conservation of 14.39 acres of open space provided within four dedicated open space lots. The open space areas would be located primarily along existing drainages along the western site boundary and north-central portion of the site that drain to the seasonal pond in the southwest corner of the property. The biological open space areas would be preserved in their natural state with a permanent conservation easement and mechanism for privately funded on-going maintenance. Enhancement and restoration of the open space areas would include removal of non-native species, and seeding/planting with a mix of native shrubs and trees. Public pedestrian access to the pond would be allowed because the project seeks to preserve it as a public amenity.

The project site would have one vehicular entrance/exit (exclusive of emergency access), located off Felicita Road approximately 800 feet north of the Felicita Road/Miller Avenue intersection. Two emergency access gates would be located off Hamilton Lane at the end of the on-site cul-de-sacs. The lots east of Miller Avenue would take access from Hamilton Lane, the street on which they front.

The project would involve grading resulting in cut and fill slopes within the property to accommodate several building pads. All modified slopes would have a 2:1 inclination ratio. Also, the proposed project would be landscaped with native and drought-tolerant, low water use vegetation meeting low or medium water use classification of landscape species rating to minimize water consumption.

Project utilities construction would include the extension of gas and electric transmission facilities, sewer and water pipelines, and communications facilities. The site would be designed so that runoff from the residential lots would drain to the private streets within the subdivision. On-site drainage improvements would include a storm drain system and flood attenuation/bio-retention basins to safely convey runoff and to mitigate any increase in peak storm water flows from the proposed project.

Project construction is estimated to occur over an approximately 39-month period, beginning in the 3rd quarter of 2015 and ending in the 4th quarter of 2017. Construction would be separated into two phases: site and infrastructure improvements (lasting approximately 13 months) and residential construction (lasting approximately 30 months). The project estimates approximately five to six months of overlap between the two phases, though timing could change.

DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

According to Section 15050 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Escondido is designated as the Lead Agency for the project and, as such, will be responsible for the approval or denial of the discretionary actions associated with the project under the jurisdiction of the City. The major discretionary actions are:

- Tentative Map Approval
- Prezone the project site from County RR-1 and A-70 zoning to City PD R (Planned Development-Residential) zoning
- Prezone the Chalice Unitarian Universalist Congregation property from County A-70 to City RE-20
- Preliminary Development Plan, Master Development Plan, Precise Development Plan and Grading Exemption

Additionally, the following agencies must take the associated discretionary actions for the proposed project's completion.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Conditional letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and Letter of Map Revision (LOMR)

San Diego LAFCO

- Reorganization including Annexation to the City of Escondido and detachment from CSA 135 (Regional Communications/Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Service [EMS])

Rincon Del Diablo Municipal Water District

- Annexation to Improvement District 1 of RDDMWD for water service for six lots (Lots 60-65) in the northeast corner of the site.
- Detachment from Improvement District E of RDDMWD for fire services.

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB):

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Activities Storm Water General Permit
- Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):

- Clean Water Act Nationwide 39 Section 404 Permit

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW):

- California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement

TOPICS TO BE ANALYZED IN THE EIR

The EIR will address potential direct and cumulative impacts associated with the environmental issues listed below. Detailed analyses will be conducted to ascertain the proposed project's effects on the environment and the relative degree of impact prior to implementation of mitigation measures. Mitigation measures will be prescribed for those impacts determined to be significant with the purpose of eliminating the impact or reducing the impact to the maximum extent feasible. Analyses of alternatives to the proposed project, including the No Project Alternative, will be included in the EIR.

Aesthetics. The EIR will include an analysis of potential impacts to the area viewscape resulting from project construction. Visual resources and lighting will also be addressed.

Agriculture. The EIR will describe historical and current agricultural uses on the site and assess potential impacts to agricultural resources due to conversion of the site to a non-agricultural use. The EIR will address project consistency with applicable zoning, agricultural use encumbrances, sections of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act of 2000 pertaining to agriculture and the San Diego LAFCO Policy L-101 (Preservation of Open Space and Agricultural Lands).

Air Quality. The EIR will include an analysis of the potential effect of the proposed project on local and regional air quality. The assessment will address potential grading-, construction-, and operation-related impacts. The EIR will also discuss project consistency with applicable air quality regulations.

Biological Resources. Potential impacts to biological resources resulting from project implementation will be evaluated. Potential impacts to sensitive habitats; plant or animal species; and wetlands, waters of the U.S., and waters of the State will be described in the EIR. Project consistency with applicable biological resources regulations will also be discussed.

Cultural Resources. Prehistoric and historical resources on the project site, if any, will be identified and potential impacts will be assessed to on-site cultural resources.

Geology and Soils. The EIR will address potential geologic hazards associated with project grading and construction activities.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The EIR will include a discussion of global climate change issues and will include discussion of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the proposed project. Potential conflicts with applicable plans, policies, and regulations will be addressed, if appropriate.

Hazardous and Hazardous Materials. The EIR will identify the potential to create a hazard to the public or the environment associated with prior activities that occurred on the project site and the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials associated with the project.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The EIR will include a discussion of applicable regulations governing both surface water hydrology and water quality. Potential impacts from construction- and operation-generated water quality pollutants will be addressed.

Land Use and Planning. The EIR will describe the proposed project's consistency with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations.

Noise. The EIR will address potential temporary and permanent impacts to off-site sensitive receptors from noise generated by project-related construction activities and post-construction activities. Impacts to on-site sensitive receptors from off-site noise generators will be described. The EIR will discuss project consistency with applicable noise regulations.

Public Services. The EIR will assess the potential impacts to fire protection, police protection, schools, and parks resulting from project implementation.

Transportation and Traffic. The EIR will assess the current and anticipated future potential impacts to off-site vehicular circulation resulting from construction activities and operations. Alternative transportation (public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities) will be discussed. The EIR will discuss project consistency with applicable traffic/circulation plans, policies, ordinances, and programs.

Utilities and Service Systems. The EIR will address the availability and potential impacts to wastewater treatment facilities, water supplies, and sanitary landfills. The EIR will discuss project consistency with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.

The proposed project is not anticipated to result in impacts to population and housing, recreation, forestry resources, and mineral resources.

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

Responsible agencies are those agencies that are not the Lead Agency, but also have discretionary approval authority over one or more discretionary actions involved with the development of a proposed project. Trustee agencies are state agencies that have jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a proposed project that are held in trust for the people of the State of California. The potential responsible and trustee agencies that have been identified as part of the preparation of the EIR and the required permits, approvals, or their associated responsibilities for the proposed project are listed below.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

- Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and Letter of Map Revision (LOMR)

San Diego LAFCO:

- Reorganization including annexation to the City of Escondido and detachment from County Service Area 135 (Regional Communications / Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services)
- Annexation to Improvement District 1 for water service for six lots in the northeast corner of the site
- Detachment from Improvement District E for fire services

Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB):

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Activities Storm Water General Permit
- Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):

- Clean Water Act Nationwide 39 Section 404 Permit

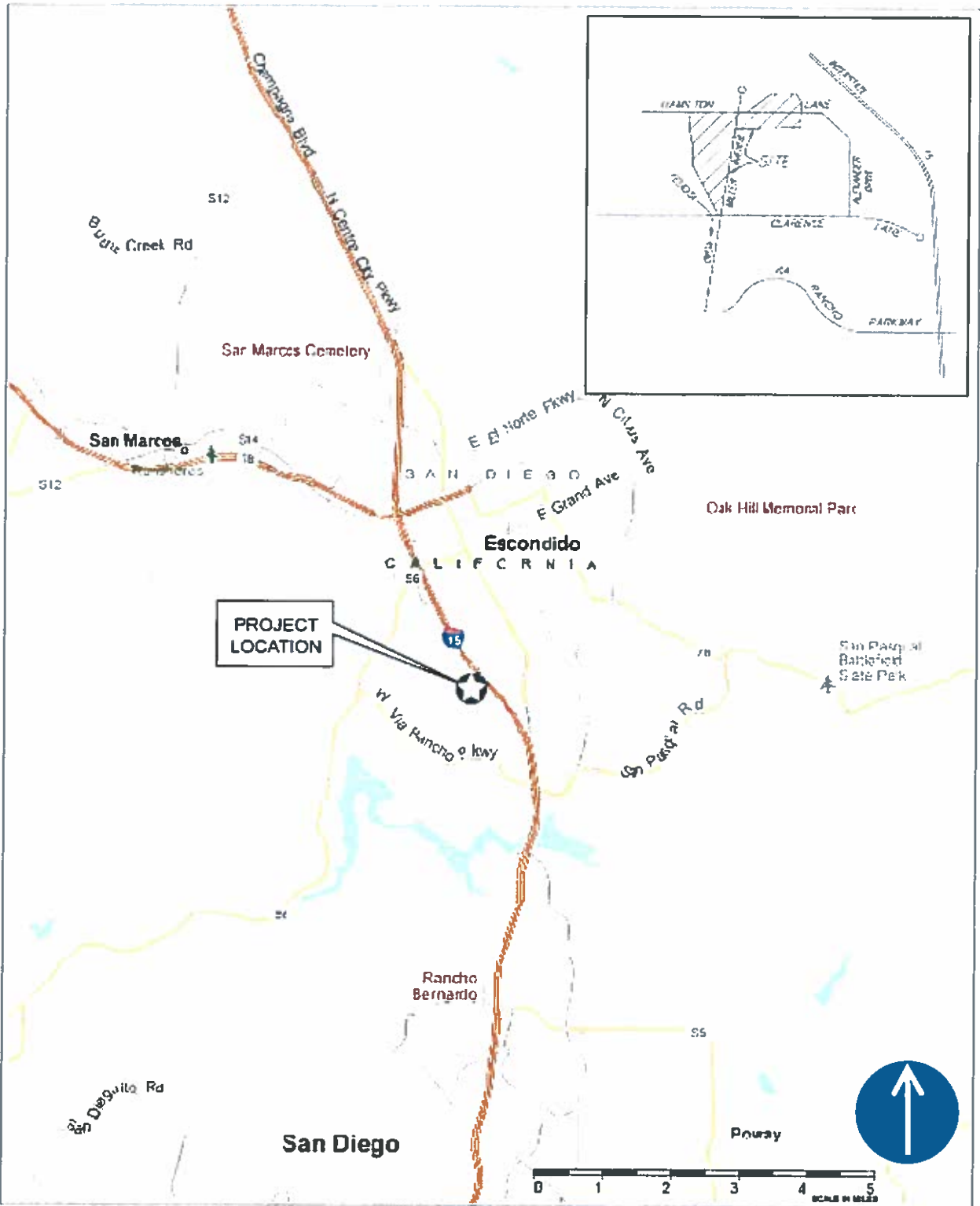
California Department of Fish and Wildlife:

- California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES

This NOP for the proposed project will be submitted to the State Clearinghouse, which will forward it to potential Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies. Other interested parties that may have permit authority or have specifically requested notification of the project also will receive a copy of the NOP.

After the 30-day review period for the NOP is complete and all comments are received, a Draft EIR will be completed in accordance with CEQA as amended (California Code of Regulations, Section 15000 et seq.). Once the Draft EIR has been completed, it will be made available for public review and comment. Copies of the Draft EIR will be mailed directly to those agencies commenting on the NOP and also will be available for review at the City of Escondido Planning Division, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

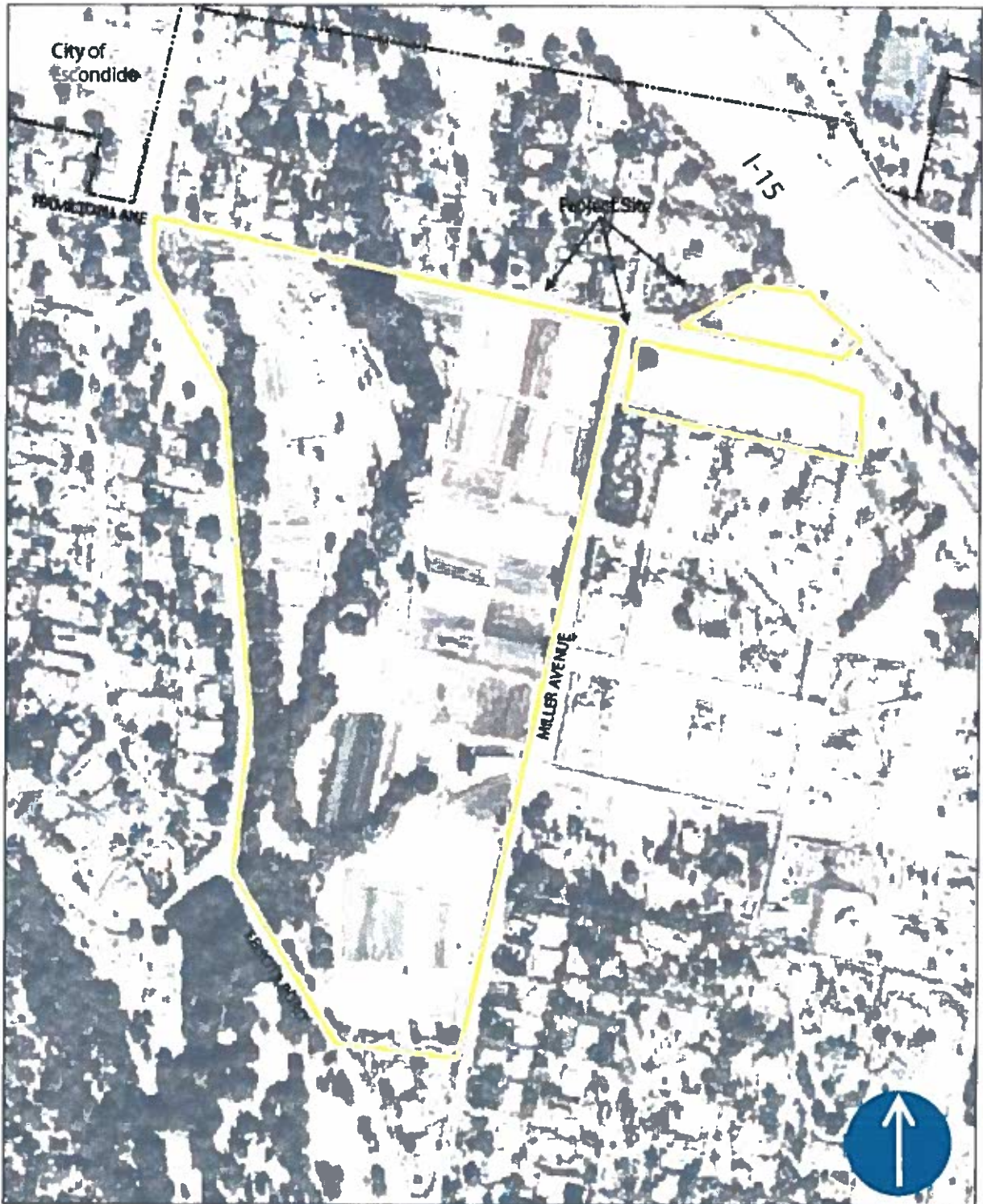


Source: Microsoft Streets 2009



REGIONAL LOCATION

Figure 1



Source: Google Maps 2014

Scale: Not to scale



PROJECT VICINITY

Figure 2

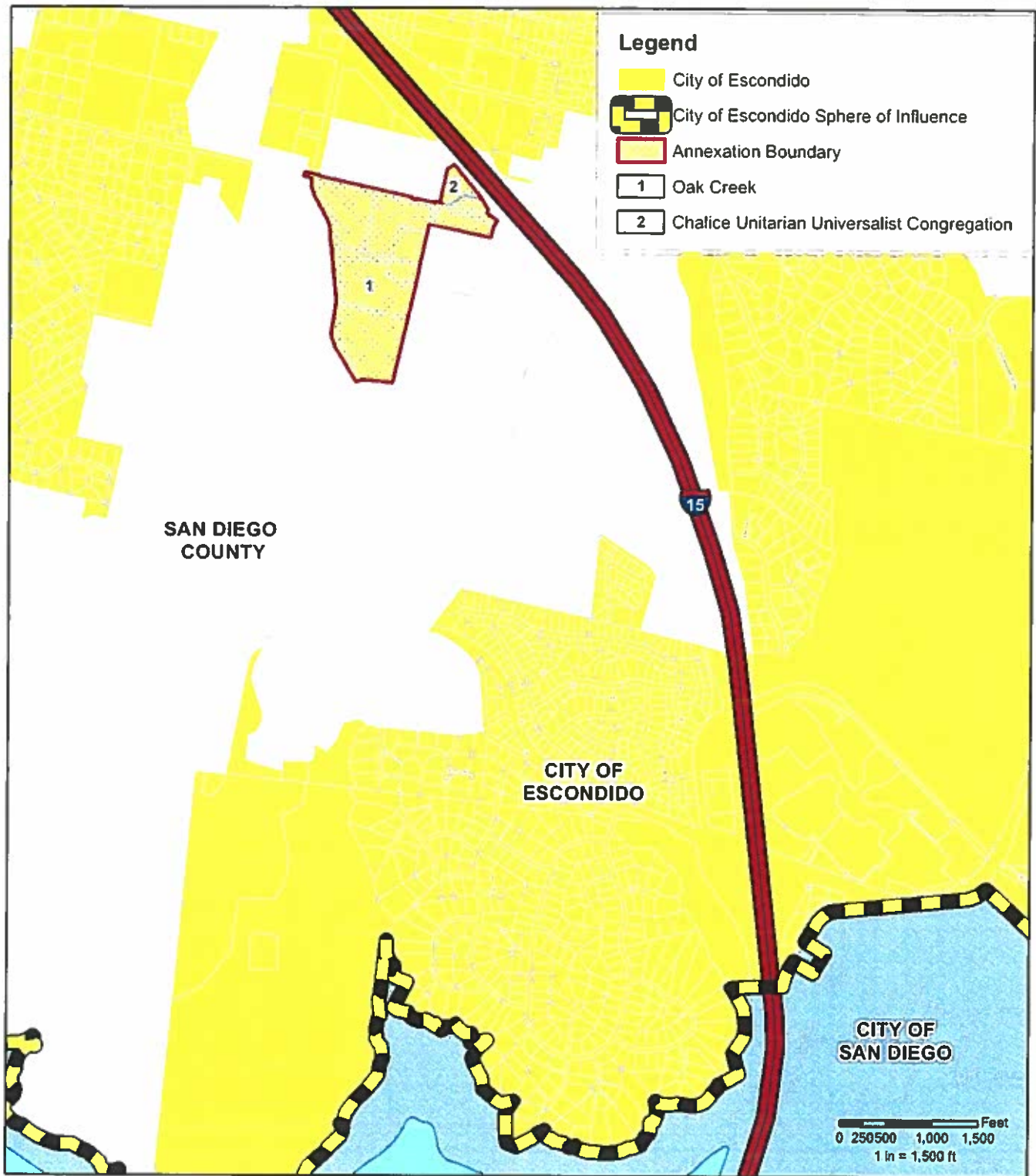


Scale: Not to scale

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN



Figure 3



Source: SanGIS and The City of Escondido. Parcel lines were derived from SanGIS data and are not survey accurate.

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