

Section 3 – Project Description

This Draft Environmental Impact Report DEIR analyzes the potential environmental effects of the construction and operation of the proposed Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 and all associated on- and off-site supporting improvements, which are herein collectively referred to as the “Project.”

3.1 Project Location and Setting

3.1.1 Project Location

The overall Project vicinity is shown on **Figure 3-1 – Vicinity Map**. The Project site encompasses approximately 76 gross acres (71 net acres) and is located at the eastern portion of the City of Riverside (“City”) within the Sycamore Canyon Business Park in the Sycamore Canyon/Canyon Springs neighborhood (**Figure 3-2 – Location Map**). The Project site is located approximately 0.4-mile west of Sycamore Canyon Boulevard at the western terminus of Dan Kipper Drive, north and west of Lance Drive. The Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APNs) for the Project site are:

- 263-020-003
- 263-020-004
- 263-020-005
- 263-020-006
- 263-300-001
- 263-300-002
- 263-300-003
- 263-300-004
- 263-300-005
- 263-300-006
- 263-300-025
- 263-300-029
- 263-300-030
- 263-300-033
- 263-300-034 (portion)
- 263-300-035
- 263-300-036

3.1.2 Economic Revitalization Studies and Specific Plans in the Project Area

The Project site and surrounding area has been the subject of City planning efforts since the early 1980s. To place the current surrounding land uses and proposed Project into context, these efforts are described below.

Conducted 1978 – Economic Revitalization Studies

As the only large, undeveloped area of land not previously subject to detailed planning analysis, the site had been identified as a potentially significant development opportunity in economic revitalization studies conducted in 1978.¹

Adopted 1979 – Arlington Heights Plan

The adoption of the Arlington Heights Plan for the area immediately to the southwest in June of 1979, served to stimulate action to take a new look at this area and restudy the 1969 General Plan. Another factor was the County of Riverside Woodcrest Area Plan involving land to the south.

¹¹ Refer to page 3 of the SCBPSP.

Consequently, in early 1979, the City joined the County in adopting interim two-acre "Residential-Agricultural" zoning over a large portion of this area as a control pending further studies.²

Amended 1979 – Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ)

Another significant factor is the Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) report for March Air Force Base. As amended in October of 1979, this official Department of the Air Force study identifies aircraft noise and accident potential effects of the mission at March AFB. It also recommends land use plans, policies, and ordinances which are intended to insure compatible relationships in the local environs of the base.

The bulk of property within the Sycamore Canyon Business Park is described as impacted by aircraft noise contours of 80 CNEL or above. In addition, a large area of land along the AT&SF railroad is exposed to accident potential resulting from aircraft operations.³

Adopted 1980 – Southeast Study Area

The City of Riverside prepared a special report for the Southeast Study Area, adjacent to and complementing the County Woodcrest Study Area. As a policy report, it was adopted by the City Council in November of 1980.

The Southeast Area Study, as a land use and open space plan, is "a planning guide to future development." As shown in Figure 4, the Study calls for "Industrial Park" use of some 1,154 acres. About 250 acres (Sycamore Canyon) is shown as "Natural Arroyo." The existing property of the Edgemont Community Services district is recognized as "Public and Institutional." A small area of Retail Business and Office is indicated near Barton Street and Alessandro Boulevard.⁴

Approximately 1982 – CU-013-812

E. L. Yeager Construction Company filed a conditional use permit (CUP) for a surface mining operation to excavate primarily decomposed granite for exporting and using the overburden soils for on-site fill. The CUP was amended a number of times between 1982 and 1987. The operation was broken into phases: Phase 1A (30 acres), Phase 1B (14 acres), Phase 2 (15 acres), and Phase 3 (25 acres). These phases encompassed portions of the proposed Project site, portion of the adjacent property now located within the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park and a portion of what is now the Ralph's Distribution Facility, which is located south of the Project site.

The areas of mining were to be leveled to a uniform slope of 1.7% downward to the south. In 1985 it was estimated that the surface mining project would last approximately three years. However, in 1987 the City Council approved another review of the conditions of approval of the surface mining operation permitting this use to continue. A condition of the 1987 review noted that the grading plan for the operation was to indicate that no excavation was to occur on the

² Ibid.

³ Refer to pages 3 and 4 of the SCBPSP.

⁴ Ibid

Phase 3 site, which was to be preserved. It is not known when the mining operation was completed.

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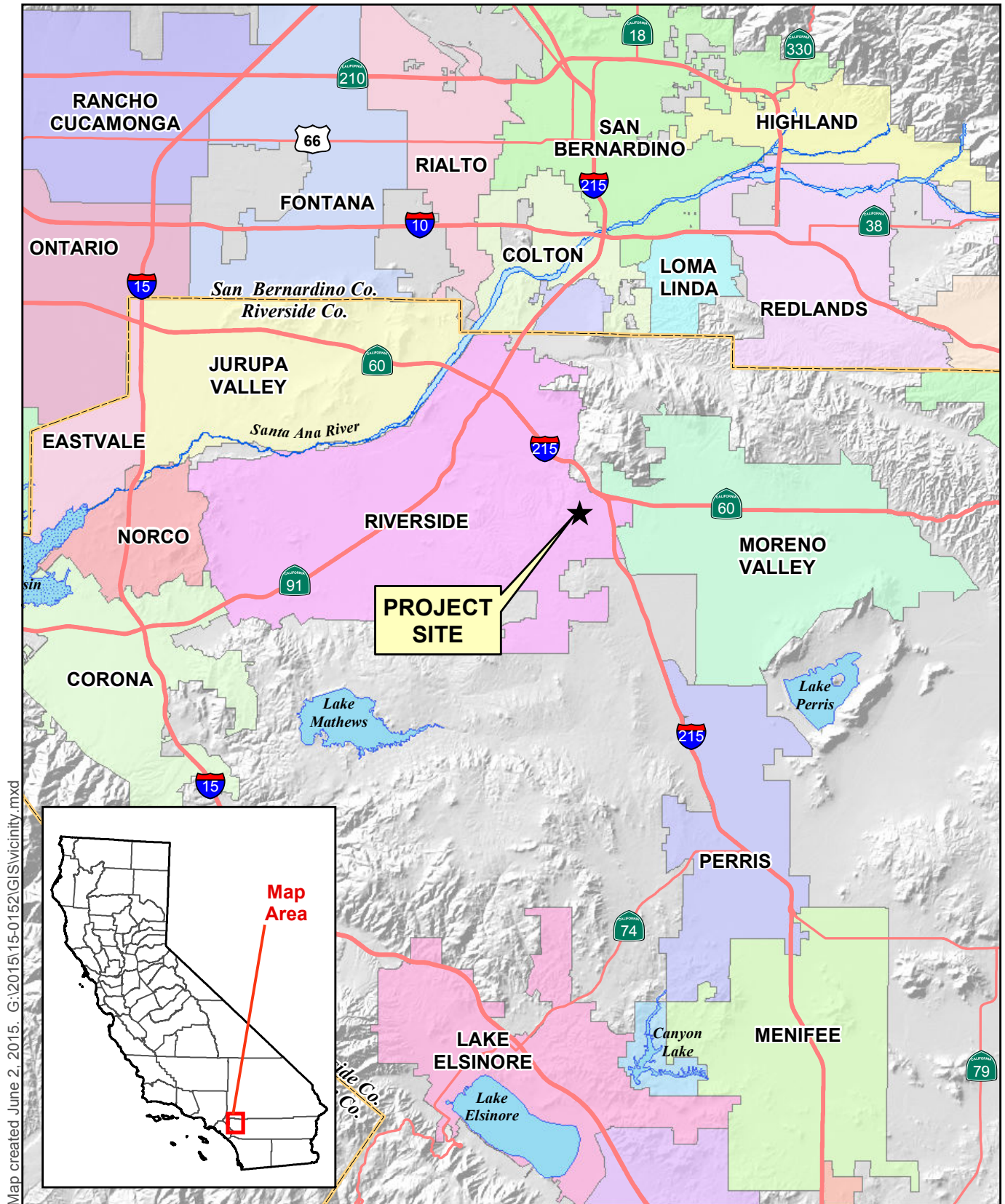
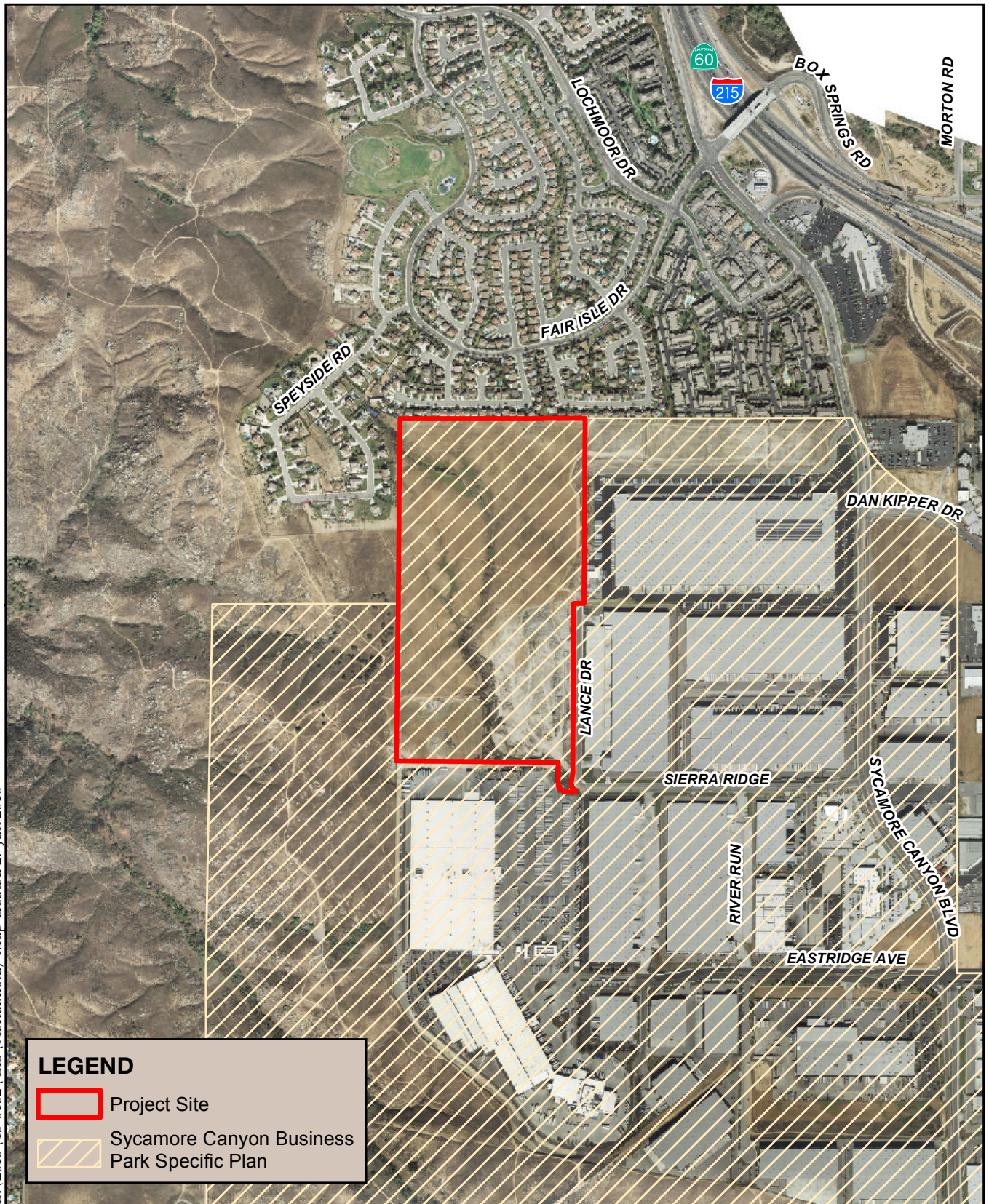


Figure 3-1 – Vicinity Map
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR



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Sources: Riverside County, 2016;
City of Riverside, 2012.



0 500 1,000 1,500
Feet

Figure 3-2 - Location Map
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR

April 1984 – Sycamore Canyon Business Park Specific Plan (SCBPSP) and EIR (Formerly Known as the Box Springs Industrial Park)

Originally known as the Box Springs Industrial Park Specific Plan, the *Sycamore Canyon Business Park Specific Plan (SCBPSP)* was adopted on April 10, 1984 and has been amended 14 times. The SCBPSP describes a planned industrial park consisting of approximately 920 acres of industrial and commercial uses and a 480 acre wilderness park (Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park) within an area encompassing approximately 1,400 acres. The purpose of the SCBPSP is to assure efficient, orderly, and attractive development within the plan area. In order to provide for orderly development with adjacent properties, preparation of the SCBPSP was coordinated with the *Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan (SCSP)* and the General Development Plan for the Sycamore Canyon Park.⁵

The series of circumstances that led to and informed preparation of the SCBPSP included: (i) the SCBPSP area was the only large, undeveloped area of land not previously subject to planning analysis; (ii) this area had been identified as a potentially significant development opportunity for economic revitalization; (iii) the adoption of the Arlington Heights Plan in 1979; (iv) the Southeast Study Area report adopted in 1980; and (v) the Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) (amended in 1979) for March Air Force Base. The AICUZ, described a bulk of the property within the SCBPSP as impacted by aircraft noise contours of 80 dBA CNEL⁶ or greater and some property within the SCBPSP area were impacted by accident potential from aircraft. Important factors in these studies included preserving the land now known as Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park and establishing land uses that would be compatible with, what is now known as the March Air Reserve Base (MARB) Airport Compatibility Plan. Under the new MARB Compatibility Plan, a good portion of the property within the SCBPSP is impacted by the C1 – Primary Approach/Departure Zone and D – Flight Corridor Buffer Compatibility Criteria that limits other land uses, such as residential uses, in this area.

April 1984 – Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan (SCSP) and EIR

The *Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan (SCSP)* was adopted on April 10, 1984 to further the voter's intent shown by the passage of Proposition R⁷ with regard to protecting natural hillside and arroyo areas. Overall development levels established by Proposition R are the basis of the SCSP; however, the location and density of development was shifted within the SCSP area. This shift was made in order to protect Sycamore Canyon as a complete ecosystem, to the extent possible, within the limitations of the SCSP area and adjacent lands. The major thrust of the SCSP was to identify the area most appropriately preserved as open space in order to protect the various natural resources in and around Sycamore Canyon. The SCSP called for preservation of over 920 acres of land of which about 450 acres are involved in the main canyon or its tributaries and the steep surrounding slopes. The remaining 470 acres to be

⁵ The SCBPSP is available on the City's website at: http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/pdf/SpecificPlans/scbp-plan-reso/plan_doc.pdf.

⁶ CNEL means Community Noise Equivalent Level. CNEL is a 24-hour weighted average of community noise. The existing noise environment is discussed in Section 5.12 – Noise.

⁷ Proposition R, is available on the City's website at: http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/pdf/Proposition_R.pdf.

preserved includes sensitive wildlife areas, archaeological areas, and linking areas, many of which have other special features such as rock outcroppings.

The SCSP provides for the development of perimeter portions of the site with residential and some commercial uses while protecting areas in and around Sycamore Canyon for open space. The relationships between the SCSP and the SCBPSP were studied and recommendations providing for coordination between these two plans were incorporated as part of both the SCSP and the SCBPSP. The proposed residential uses allowed under the SCSP were broken out of the SCSP and were instead covered by the *Lusk Highlander Specific Plan* (now known as the *Sycamore Highlands Specific Plan*).

1989 -1990 – Parcel Maps in SCBPSP

In April 1989, Parcel Map 24535 was approved to subdivide 344.8 vacant acres into approximately 72 parcels for industrial purposes, situated on both sides of Eastridge Avenue. In October of 1989, PM-24733 was approved to subdivide 128 gross acres of land into 60 parcels, including two parcels for Sycamore Canyon Park purposes and seven parcels intended for public street dedication. In December of 1990, this parcel map was revised to create a site for a fire station. Since no development was proposed at the time of either proposed parcel maps the streets were not accepted by the City as there was no development to construct the streets.

November 1990 – Sycamore Highlands Specific Plan (SHSP) (Formerly known as the Lusk Highlander Specific Plan)

The *Sycamore Highlands Specific Plan* was prepared so that development of the approximately 411 acre Sycamore Highlands property would be accomplished in an orderly and coordinated manner. This (411± acre) parcel was originally a part of the larger 637± acre Sungold Ranch. Subsequently, the former Lusk Company, and the Highlander Water Associates entered into an agreement covering this 411± acre property.

During the same period, the City began studying the Sycamore Canyon area with the intent of preserving the canyon as open space to protect valuable plant and wildlife habitats and to allow active and passive public recreation opportunities wherever compatible. In order to achieve these open space and recreation goals, as well as provide property owners within and adjacent to Sycamore Canyon an opportunity to develop in the area, the City prepared the SCSP.

A large portion of Sycamore Highlands, (approximately 351 acres) is within the SCSP boundary. The remaining approximately 60 acres of Sycamore Highlands, was located adjacent to the City's boundary in unincorporated Riverside County. This area, known as LAFCO No.86-14-5, was annexed to the City on July 8, 1986 by Resolution No. 16168. Because this 60± acre annexation area was not addressed in the SCSP, the *Sycamore Highlands Specific Plan* covers the entire 411± acre property.

March 1999 – Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park Stephen’s Kangaroo Rat Management Plan and Updated Conceptual Development Plan

The *Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park Stephens’ Kangaroo Rat Management Plan and Updated Conceptual Development Plan* was prepared with two purposes: update the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park’s (the “Park”) conceptual development plan and provide a coordinated Maintenance/Management Plan for the endangered Stephens’ kangaroo rat (SKR). The City was required to prepare a Maintenance/Management Plan because the Park was designated as a core reserve in the *Habitat Conservation Plan for the Stephen’s Kangaroo Rat in Western Riverside County, California* (the SKR HCP).⁸

Adopted November 2014 – March Air Reserve Base /Inland Port Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

The March Air Reserve Base / Inland Port Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (March ARB/IPA ALUCP) was prepared for and adopted by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (RCALUC). In accordance with provisions of the California State Aeronautics Act (Public Utilities Code Section 21670 et seq.), the RCALUC has been assigned the lead responsibility for airport land use compatibility planning around each of the public-use and military airports in Riverside County, including the preparation of an ALUCP for each airport.⁹

As noted on Map MA-1 of the March ARB/IPA ALUCP the Project site is located in Compatibility Zone D for the northern portion of the Project site and Zone C1 for the rest of the property. Per Table MA-2 – Basic Compatibility Criteria Zone D, the Flight Corridor Buffer Zone, permits most uses, including residential. Zone C1, the Primary Approach/Departure Zone, also permits most uses, including residential but limits the density/intensity of residential uses. Whereas at the same time SCBPSP was created the Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) report for March Air Force Base (Riverside County CLUP) was also being updated and was adopted on April 26, 1984. The new CLUP placed the SCBPSP into Area II. This area was defined to be those areas of significant safety concerns due to aircraft maneuvering, ascending, descending, turning, and changing power settings when landing or taking off from the airport. Although Area II permitted residential uses, lots sizes were limited 2 ½ acres maximum density. Due to the safety concerns, the City chose another use for the area that would have less intensity of people, the industrial use.¹⁰

3.1.3 Project Site – Existing Conditions

The Project site currently consists of vacant and hilly land that is primarily undisturbed with the exception of:

⁸ The SKR HCP was approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and game in August 1990. http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/pdf/SpecificPlans/SycCynMnmgmtPlan_UpdatedConceptualPlan.pdf

⁹ March Air Reserve Base / Inland Port Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Adopted November 13, 2014)

¹⁰ Riverside County Airport Land Use Plan, 1984

<http://www.rcaluc.org/Portals/0/PDFGeneral/plan/oldplan/Riverside%20County.PDF> &

[http://www.rcaluc.org/Portals/0/PDFGeneral/plan/oldplan/March%20Air%20Reserve%20Base%20\(MARB\).pdf](http://www.rcaluc.org/Portals/0/PDFGeneral/plan/oldplan/March%20Air%20Reserve%20Base%20(MARB).pdf)

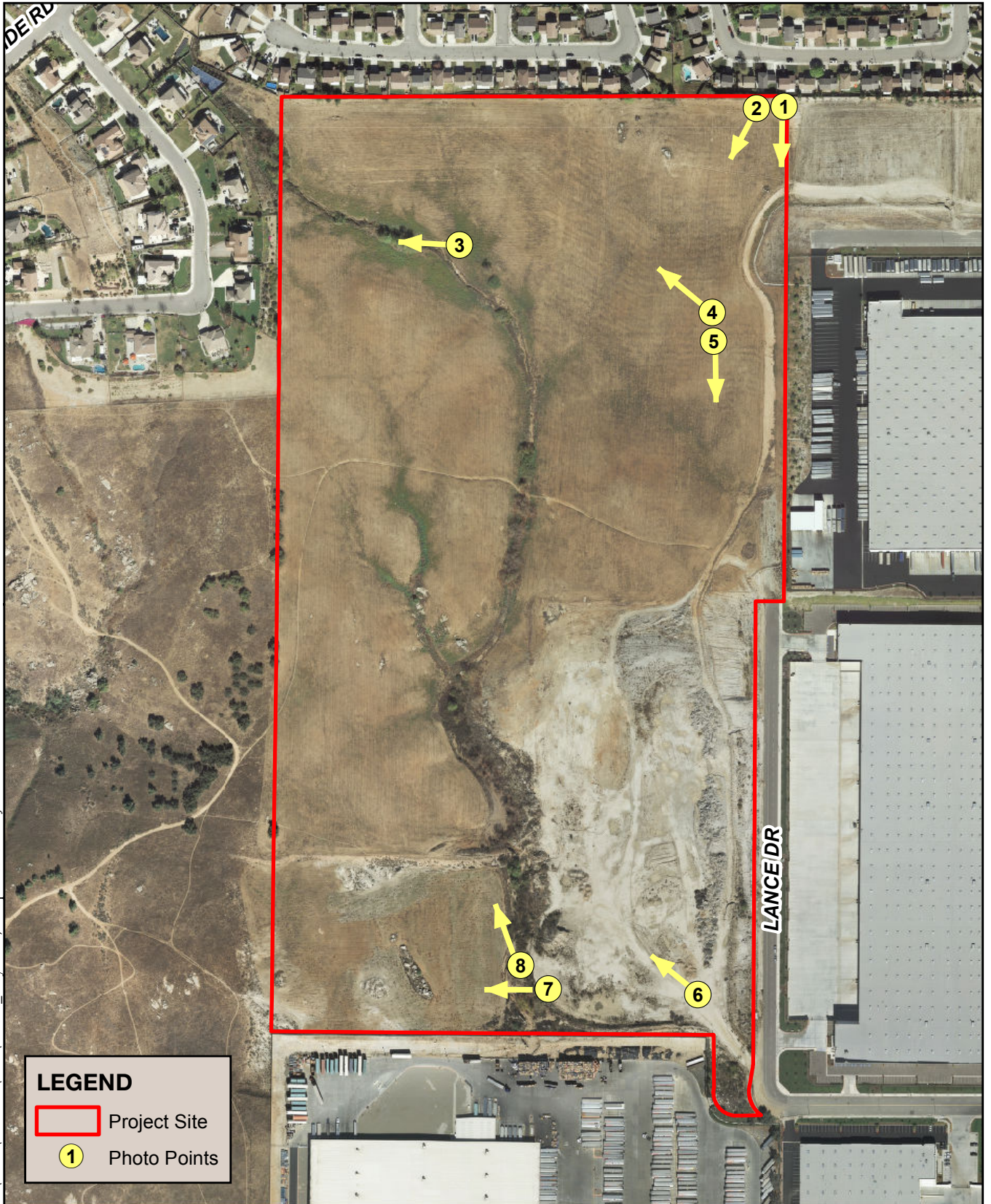
1. a USGS blue line stream with dense riparian vegetation that begins in the northwest runs through the central area of the site then traverses the property in a southeasterly direction across the site. It is fed by a culvert that collects stormwater flows from the homes in the Sycamore Highlands Specific Plan area at the northwest corner of the property and then collects water that sheet flows across the existing property;
2. a man-made earthen trail across the middle of the subject site in an east to west direction that leads into the adjacent Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park to the west of the Project site;
3. the lower southeastern area of the site, which consists of disturbed land that was utilized for rock crushing, sand stockpiling, and construction equipment storage. As part of the on-site rock crushing operation, there is a stockpiled cluster of rocks in the southern area of the site that appears to have been intended for crushing. It is anticipated that these rocks will be crushed during Project construction and used on site;
4. a concrete V-ditch that commences approximately 235 feet south of the northeast corner of the Project site and curves to the west in an approximately semicircular shape that returns to the Project's eastern boundary at a point approximately 488 feet south of the northeast corner. The V-ditch then continues south approximately 405 feet to an outlet structure that connects to a V-ditch located on western side of the Ralph's Distribution Center;
5. a small earthen check dam starting about 100-feet above the termination point of the existing Lance Drive that curves to the west in an approximately semicircular shape and returns to the Project's eastern boundary at the knuckle of Lance Drive and Sierra Ridge Drive. Adjacent to the earthen dam and V ditch is a dirt road beginning at Dan Kipper Drive and following the earthen dam, breaking off into another dirt road, both circling back to Sierra Ridge Drive;
6. except for the riparian habitat and disturbed southeastern area, the Project site consists of non-native grasslands with evidence of recent discing in areas along the perimeter and bicycle and off-road motorized vehicular use in several places throughout the Project site;¹¹
7. there is also an isolated man-made depression in the southern area of the Project site which is a remnant from prior uses;
8. access to the Project site is from Sierra Ridge Drive, Lance Drive, and Dan Kipper Drive;¹²

¹¹ Refer to Section 5.4 – Biological Resources for additional information regarding existing biological resources.

¹² Refer to Section 5.16 – Transportation/Traffic for additional information regarding the existing circulation system

9. two feet south of the northern property line exists a wooden fence separating the backyards of the homes to the north from the Project site (one backyard fence has a cnu wal and one has a newer vinyl fence). The fence is in various stages of condition from good to leaning over and in some places with plants hanging over the fence. In at least one location a gate has been cut into the backyard fence, supposedly for giving the homeowner access to subject property, possibly for the purposes of walking a dog;
10. at the northwestern boundary, the homes to the northwest generally have chain link fencing at the toe (bottom) of their backyard slopes. There are a few homes that have their backyard fencing at the top of the slope. The toe of slope is not located right on the residential rear property line but rather approximately 150-feet westerly of it at the north corner to approximately 4 to 5-feet westerly at the last home adjacent to the subject property. This 150-feet to 4 or 5-feet is mostly flat or generally mildly sloping toward the subject property and this land will exist between the Project's westerly boundary and the existing toe of slope/chain link backyard fences of the homes to the northwest;
11. at the southern property boundary is the Ralph's Distribution Center with an 95 inch high chain link with slates between and an approximately 95 inch high block wall between the Ralph's Distribution Center and Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park; and
12. along the eastern property line is the existing portion of Lance Drive that will be built out with this project. Across Lance Drive is the Big-5 and Flex Steel Distribution Centers. At the northeast corner, north of Dan Kipper Drive is the Sycamore Canyon Business Center which is nearing completion of construction. This project was condition to provide an 8-foot high wall along the northerly property line constructed of a two sided decorative masonry material.

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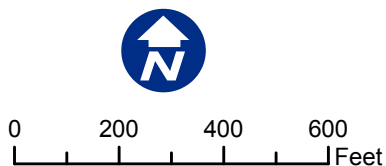


Imagery: City of Riverside, 2012.

Figure 3-3a - Views of Project Site in Existing Condition

Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR

ALBERT A.
WEBB
ASSOCIATES



View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4



Map revised 7/20/2015. C:\2015\15-0152\GIS\Site_Photos_1.mxd

Figure 3-3b - Views of Project Site in Existing Condition
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR

View 1



View 6



View 7



View 8



Figure 3-3c - Views of Project Site in Existing Condition
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR

3.1.4 Land Use Designation and Zoning

The City of Riverside General Plan 2025 (“the GP 2025”) designates the Project site as B/OP (Business/Office Park), and within the Sycamore Canyon Business Park, which is a “Major Business Park” as shown on Figure LU-4 of the GP 2025. **Figure 3-4 – Land Use Designation Map** (of this DEIR) shows the existing land use designation of the Project site and surrounding area. Additionally, as previously discussed, development of the Project site is guided by the SCPBSP, which was adopted in 1984 by the City in order to encourage and provide incentives for economic development in the 1,400-acre planning area. The *Sycamore Canyon Business Park Specific Plan* designates the Project site as Industrial as shown on SCSPBP Exhibit 5. Further, per City’s Zoning Map, the Project site is zoned BMP (Business and Manufacturing Park Zone). The BMP zone is one of four industrial zones within the City. **Figure 3-5 – Zoning Map** shows the existing zoning of the Project site and surrounding area.

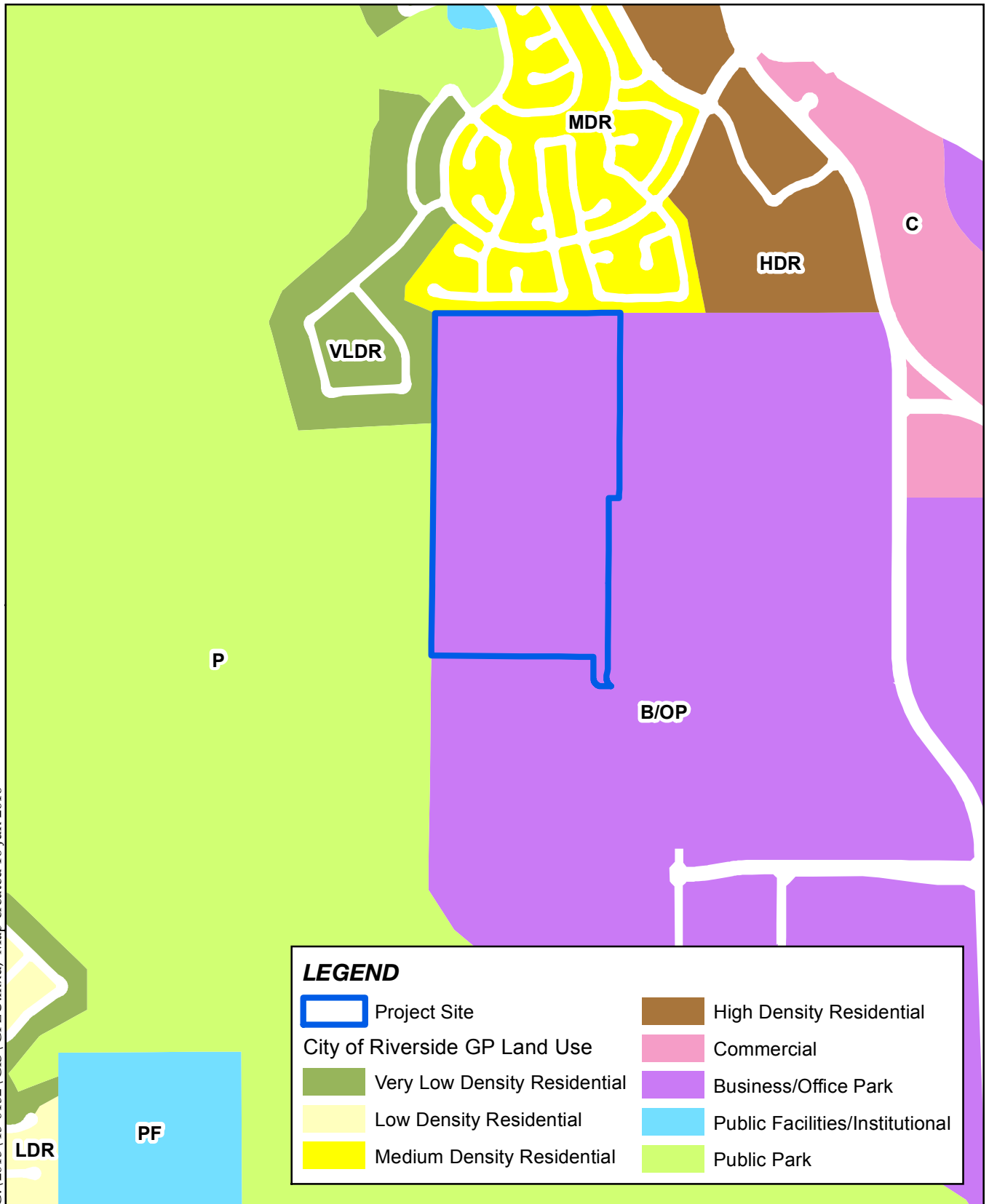
3.1.5 Surrounding Land Uses

As shown on **Figure 3-2**, land use north of the Project site consists of existing medium density and very low-density, detached single-family residences, northwest of the Project site is existing very low density, detached single-family residences. The remaining westerly side of the Project site is the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, an open space wilderness reserve with on-site bike and hiking trails for recreational users. East and south of the Project site are existing large-scaled light industrial uses, consisting of distribution centers and warehousing within the Sycamore Canyon Business Park.

The area west of the northern portion of the Project site is designated by the GP 2025 as VLDR (Very Low Density Residential) and the area north of the Project site is designated as MDR (Medium Density Residential). The area to the east and south of the Project site is designated B/OP (Business/Office Park), and the area to the west of the southern portion of the Project site is designated P (Public Park). (See **Figure 3-4**.) The existing surrounding land uses are consistent with the GP 2025 land use designations. As previously indicated, the area west, north, and northeast of the Project site are within the *Sycamore Highlands Specific Plan* area; and while the area immediately west of the Project site is within the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park boundary.

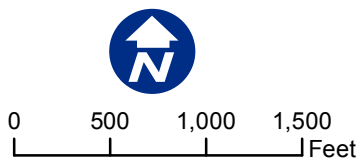
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Source: City of Riverside General Plan 2025

Figure 3-4 - Land Use Designation Map
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR



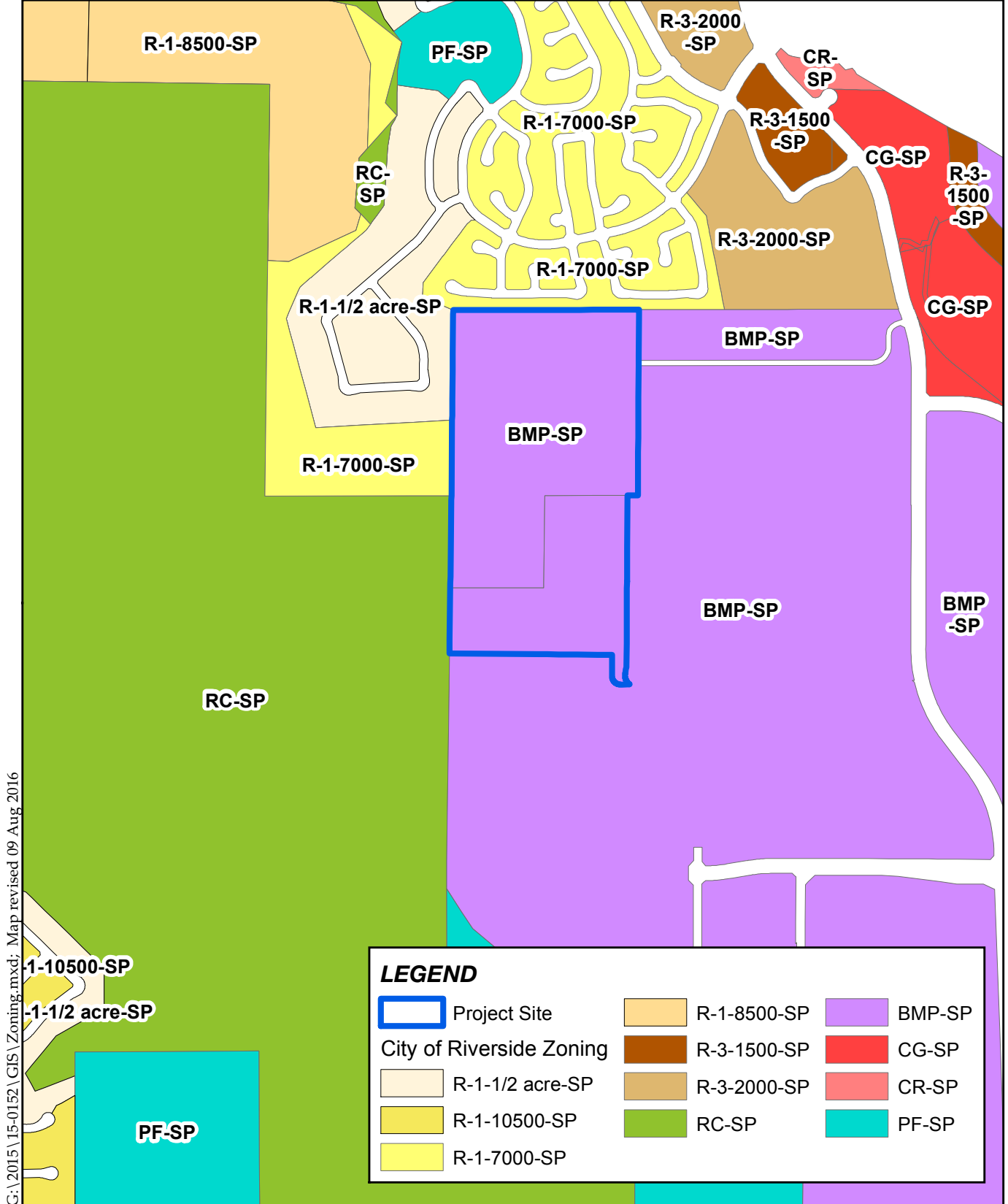
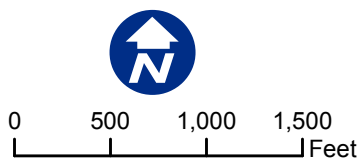


Figure 3-5 - Zoning Map
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR



As shown in **Figure 3-5**, the area west of the proposed Project site is zoned R-1-7000 (Additional Single-Family Residential Zone with minimum 7,000-square-foot lots), R-1-1/2 acre (Additional Single-Family Residential Zone with minimum half-acre lots), and RC (Residential Conservation Zone). The area north and northeast of the Project site is zoned R-1-7000 (Additional Single-Family Residential Zone with minimum 7,000-square-foot lots) and the area east and south of the Project site is zoned BMP (Business and Manufacturing Park Zone). The existing surrounding land uses are consistent with the current zoning. However, it should be noted the area zoned for R-1-7000 west of the Project site, which is within the Sycamore Highlands Specific Plan area, has not be developed, and this same area is designated P (Public Park) by the GP 2025. (See **Figure 3-5**.)

3.2 Project Characteristics

Implementation of the proposed Project will require the approval of the following land use cases by the City of Riverside City Council.

3.2.1 General Plan Amendment (P16-0101)

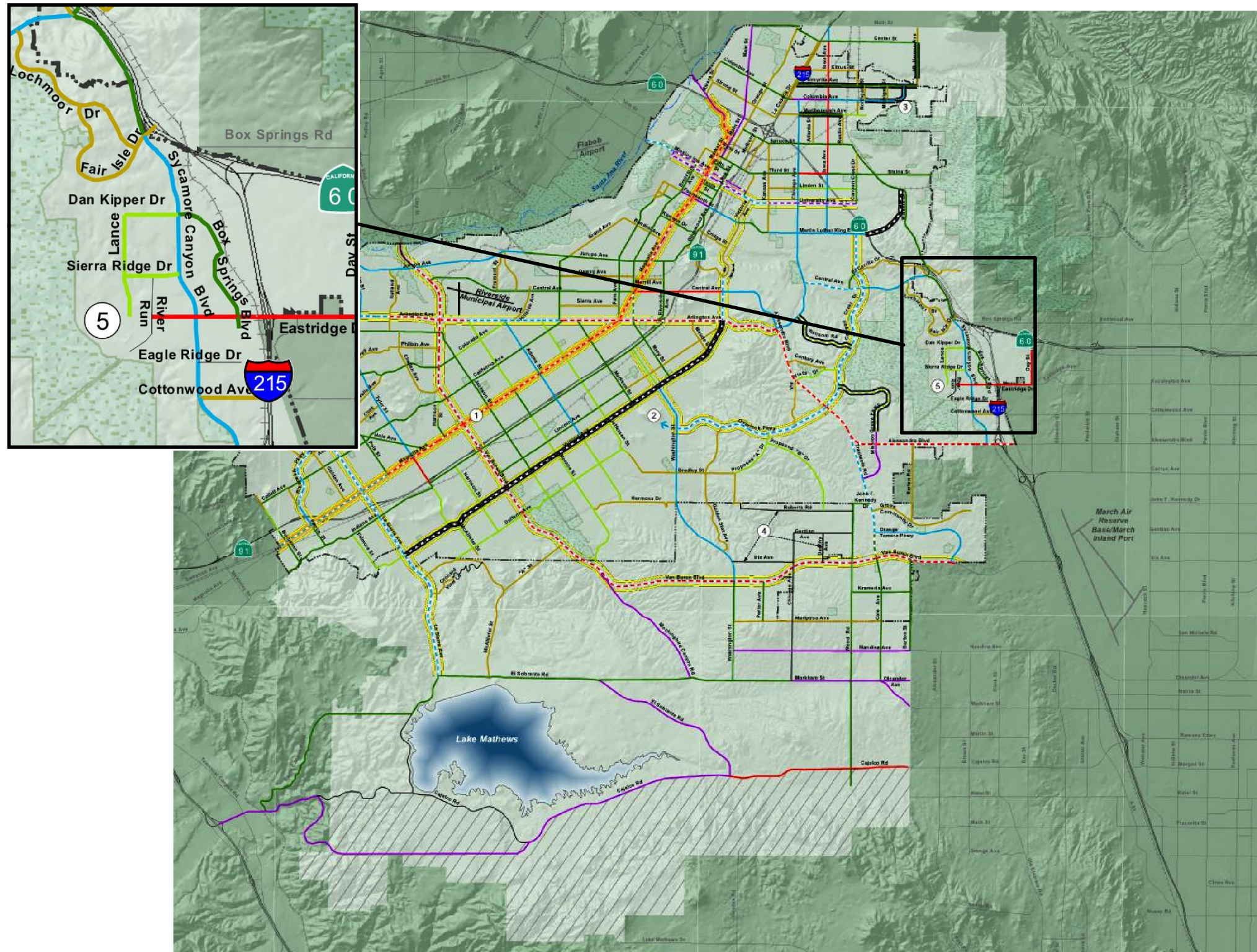
The Projects proposes an amendment to the GP 2025 Circulation Element to: (i) delete the north/south street known as River Ridge (60-foot Local) that traverses the site; (ii) delete the no name east/west street (that has been known as Kangaroo Court) that traverses the Project site, southerly of River Ridge (60-foot Local) and (iii) amend the Circulation Element to reflect these changes by showing Dan Kipper Drive ending at Lance Drive. (See **Figure 3-6 – Proposed General Plan Amendment**.)

Specific Plan Amendment (P16-0101)

The Project proposes a specific plan amendment to the Circulation Plan of the SCBPSP to: (i) delete the portion of Dan Kipper Drive (proposed 74-foot Collector) that traverses the Project site; (ii) delete the north/south street known as River Ridge (60-foot Local) that traverses the site; (iii) delete the no name east/west street (that has been known as Kangaroo Court) that traverses the site, southerly of River Ridge (60-foot Local); (iv) delete the portion of Sierra Ridge Drive (74-foot Collector) that traverses the site; and (iv) amend the Circulation Plan to reflect these changes by showing Dan Kipper Drive ending at Lance Drive. (See **Figure 3-7 – Proposed Specific Plan Amendment**.)

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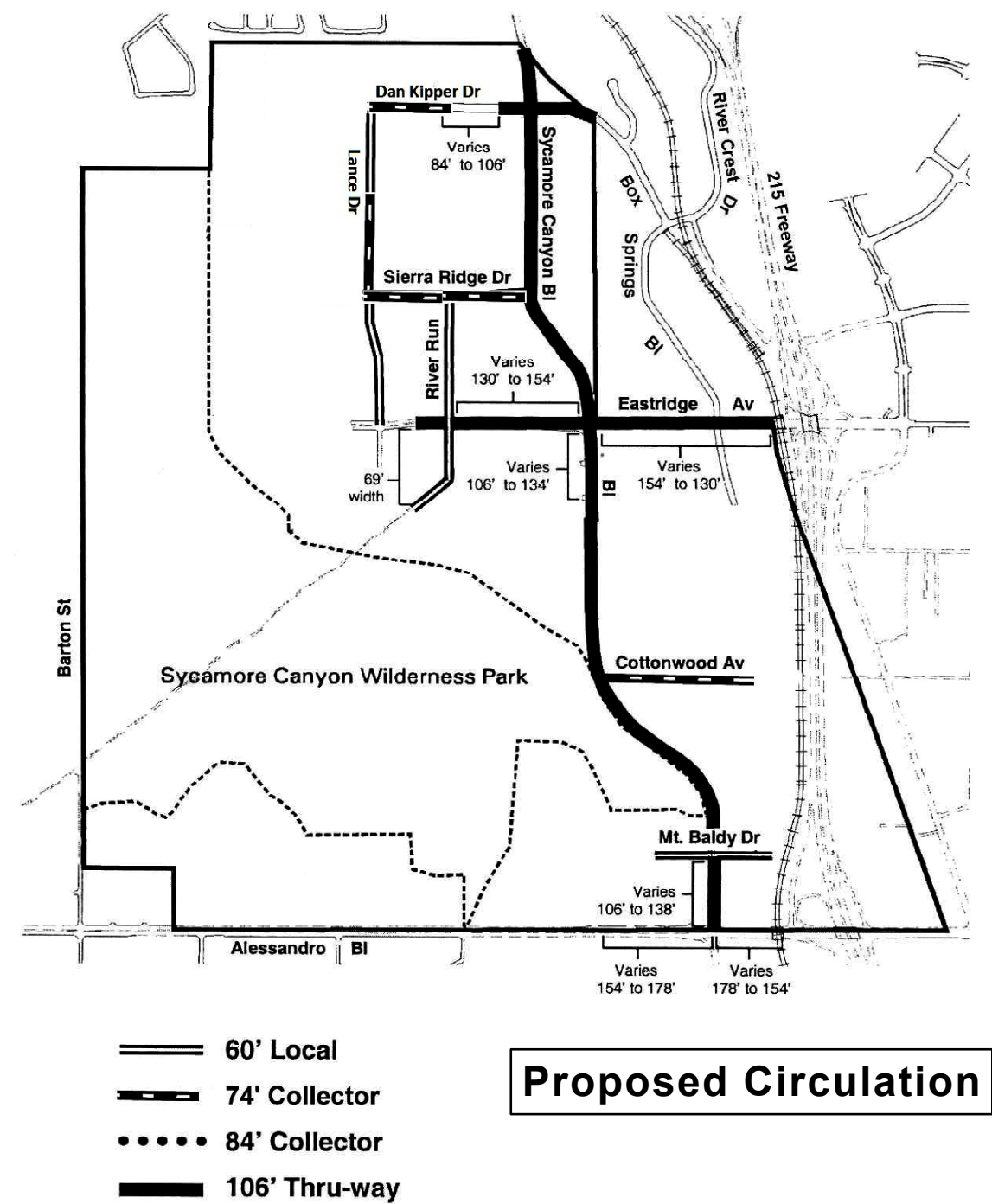
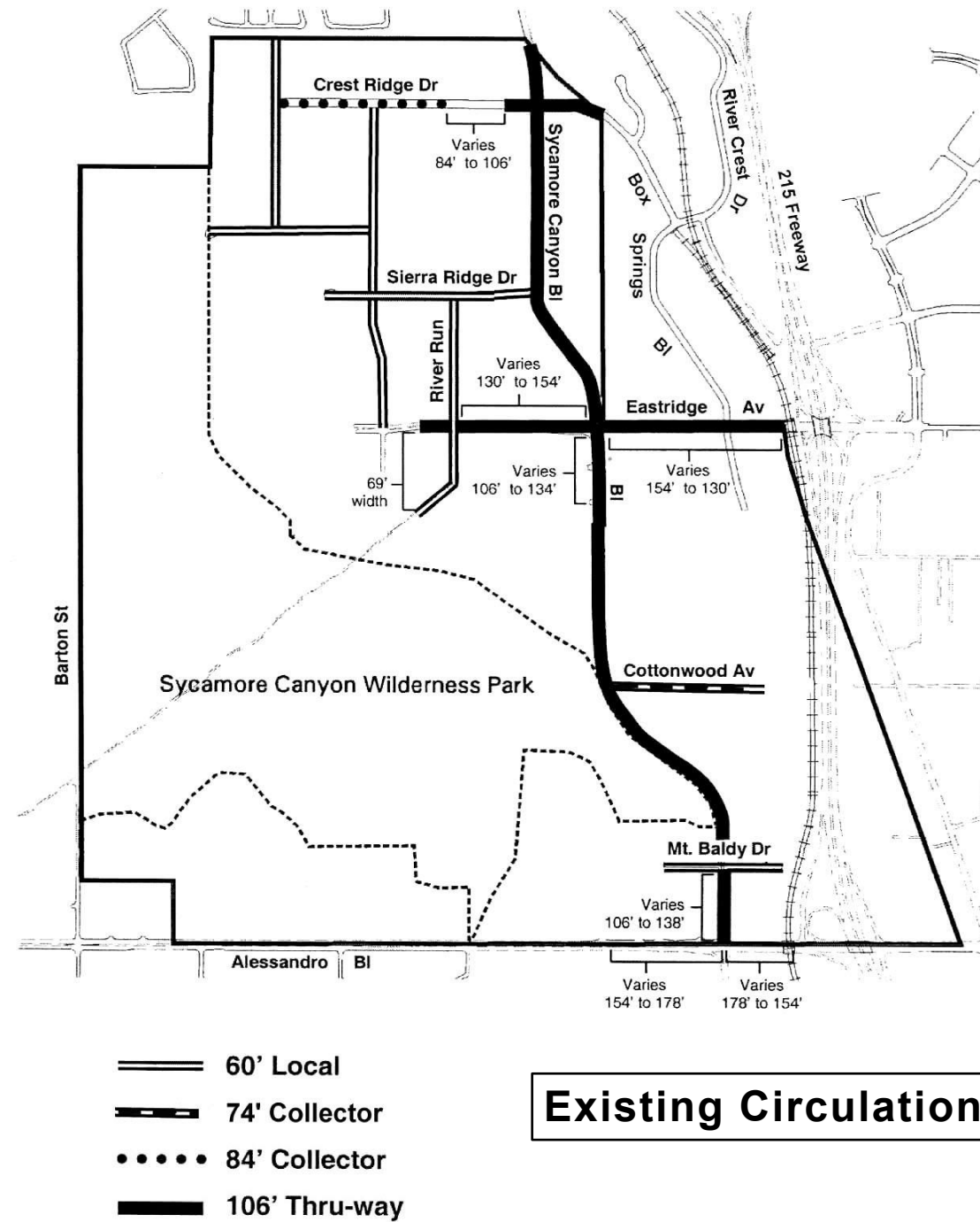
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Source: Figure CCM-4, City of Riverside Master Plan of Roadways, June 2016 Update

Figure 3-6 - Proposed General Plan Amendment
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR

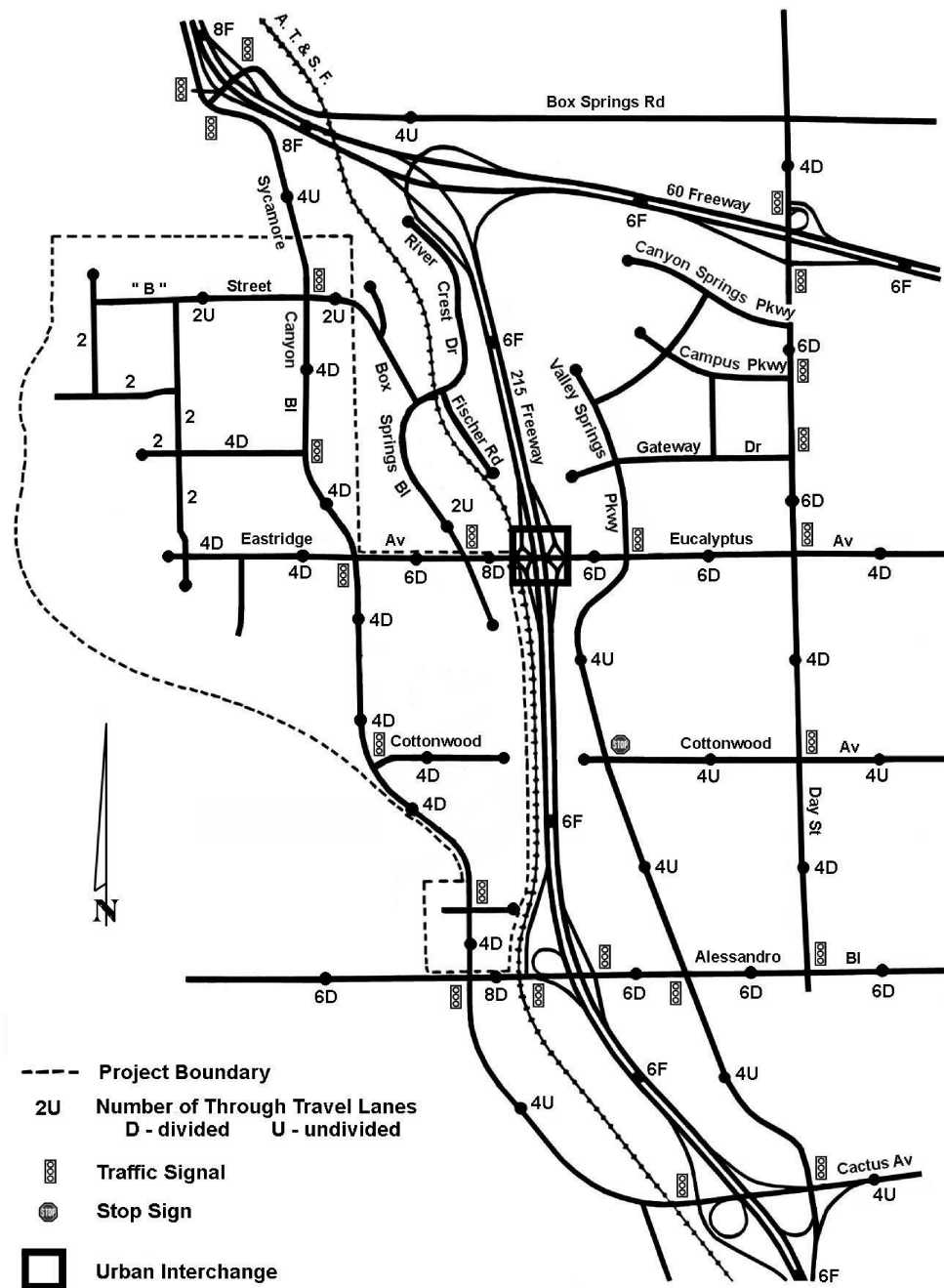
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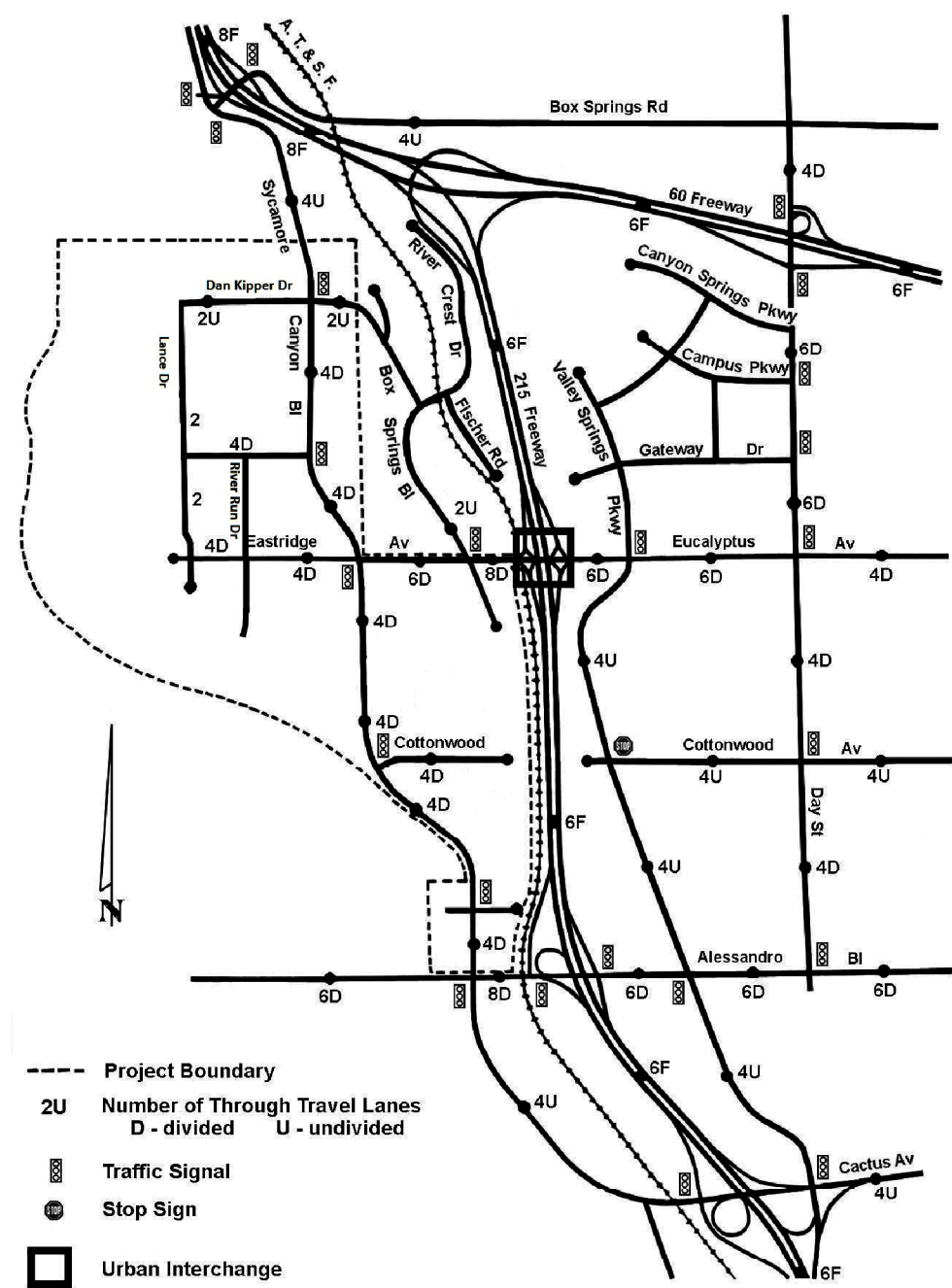
Source: Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan/EIR
Beland Associates, 1982.

Figure 3-7A - Proposed Specific Plan Amendment
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR

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Existing Circulation



Proposed Circulation

Source: Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan/EIR
Beland Associates, 1982.

Figure 3-7B - Proposed Specific Plan Amendment
Sycamore Canyon Business Park Buildings 1 and 2 DEIR