

City of Arts & Innovation

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT Planning Division

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) NORTHSIDE SPECIFIC PLAN (P19-0065) FOR THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

TO: See Distribution List

FROM LEAD AGENCY: City of Riverside
Community & Economic Development Dept.
Planning Division
Jay Eastman, AICP – Principal Planner
3900 Main Street, 3rd floor
Riverside, California 92522

DATE: March 29, 2019

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Report (EIR)

The City of Riverside will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified below. The City needs to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that 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 the potential environmental effects of the project are identified below. Maps illustrating the project location and proposed uses are attached. Note that additional materials are available at the City of Riverside office (see Lead Agency address above), including the distribution list, detailed project description, Initial Study, and the Northside Specific Plan Baseline Opportunities & Constraints Analysis (dated August 2017). These materials are also available online at: <http://northsideplan.com/>

Due to time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, **but no later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice.

An agency scoping meeting has been scheduled for April 17, 2019, at 6:00 PM, in the Springbrook Clubhouse at 1011 Orange Street, Riverside, California.

Please send your response to Jay Eastman, Principal Planner, at the address shown above. We will need the name and contact person in your agency. If you have any questions, please contact Jay Eastman at (951) 826-5264 or via e-mail at jeastman@riversideca.gov.

PROJECT TITLE: Northside Neighborhood & Pellissier Ranch Specific Plan and Program Environmental Impact Report (Northside Specific Plan)

PROJECT APPLICANT: City of Riverside, Community & Economic Development Department

PROJECT SETTING:

The Northside Specific Plan covers an approximate area of 1,700 acres that include land within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Riverside, the City of Colton, and the County of Riverside (Figure 1). The SPA is generally east of the Santa Ana River, south of the La Loma Hills, north of Fairmont Park, and west of the BNSF Railroad line. State Route (SR-60) generally bisects the site to the south and Interstate 215 (I-215) generally acts as the western boundary. The site is currently designated for a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, public facilities, recreation, and open space uses. Please reference Figures 1 to 3 for specifics.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Northside Specific Plan has been designed to accommodate a safe, healthy and balanced community that celebrates the history and culture of the greater Riverside area while providing recreation and open space opportunities for the region. The proposed balance of residential, commercial, employment and agriculture would be linked together through safe streets, connected trails, greenbelts and bicycle corridors. The plan also recognizes the importance of community features, and proposes to establish a Spanish Town Heritage Village; and restore and enhance Springbrook Arroyo within a new neighborhood center and expanded central park area. The landscaping and architectural details of the plan would reflect a connection with the past, from the early settlement of La Placita and the Old Spanish Trail period, to twentieth century Riverside. The Specific Plan includes the following land use categories: Medium Density Residential (MDR), Medium High Density Residential (MHDR), High Density Residential (HDR), Business/Office Park (B/OP), Commercial (C), Public Facilities and Institutional Uses (PF), Mixed Use (MU), Northside Village Center (NVC), Freeway Mixed Use (FMU), Spanish Town Heritage Village (STHV), and Recreation Open Space, Parks, and Trails. In addition to the land use categories, a Transition Zone Overlay covers key areas along Main Street, Center Street, Orange Avenue and the City of Colton, including Pellissier Ranch and adjacent Light Industrial properties. The definitions of each land use category and the overlay are included in the Project Description attached to the Initial Study (available at the City of Riverside or online). Refer to Figure 4 for a map of the proposed Specific Plan uses.

ISSUES OF CONCERN/SUMMARY OF PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will address all environmental topics. For the proposed project, key environmental issues of concern are anticipated to include potentially significant impacts to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology/soils (paleontological resources), greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities/service systems, and wildfire. Refer to the attached Initial Study for additional details. In summary, the analysis in the EIR will include the following specific categories of environmental impacts and concerns related to the proposed project:

Aesthetics: The EIR will address the potential effects on scenic vistas, scenic corridors, visual character, and light and glare.

Air Quality: The EIR will describe existing air quality conditions and will evaluate the potential air quality impacts of the Northside Specific Plan consistent with Southern California Air Quality Management District methodology. The EIR will discuss the measures included in the Northside Specific Plan to minimize impacts of criteria air pollutant emissions.

Biological Resources: The EIR will describe the existing biological conditions within the SPA, and potential impacts of the Northside Specific Plan on vegetation and wildlife, including special status species. The EIR will evaluate the likelihood of any significant impacts, including consistency with the Stephen's Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan and Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

Cultural Resources: The EIR will address potential impacts to historic structures, and archaeological resources.

Energy: The EIR will evaluate the project's anticipated energy usage to determine if the project would involve wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. In addition, this evaluation would address the project's consistency with renewable energy or energy efficiency plans.

Geology/Soils: The EIR will identify if the site contains potentially significant paleontological resources, and determine if the project impacts would be significant. Due to required compliance with the California Building Code, all other potential geology/soils issues were found to be less than significant in the Initial Study.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The EIR will examine the potential impacts of implementing the Northside Specific Plan relative to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and global climate change. The EIR will discuss the measures included in the Northside Specific Plan to minimize impacts of GHG emissions.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The EIR will include a description of the potential hazards in the specific planning area and the health and safety effects based on implementation of the Northside Specific Plan.

Hydrology/Water Quality: The EIR will discuss the drainage conditions throughout the plan area, the potential for flooding hazards, and effects to groundwater. The project is located partially within a flood hazard zone related to the Riverside Levee 2 and the EIR shall address this potential flooding hazard. The area also is covered by the Groundwater Management Plan for the Riverside Groundwater Basin, and compliance with this plan will be addressed in the EIR. Adherence to local, state and federal standards ensure that the project would not substantially degrade water quality or alter hydrology in a manner that would result in flooding impacts.

Land Use/Planning: The EIR will identify the land uses in the planning area and evaluate potential land use constraints created by existing conditions. The compatibility of the Northside Specific Plan with existing and proposed land uses in the planning area and consistency with city policies and plans will be evaluated.

Noise: The EIR will discuss noise impacts from implementation of the Northside Specific Plan, including impacts from area noise sources (e.g., railroads, airports, SR-60 and I-215 freeways, etc.). A noise analysis will identify existing settings and noise level scenarios associated with implementation of the Northside Specific Plan. The EIR will address potential noise impacts associated with the implementation of the Northside Specific Plan on residential and other sensitive receptor land uses. Conformance to local noise guidelines will be analyzed.

Population and Housing: The EIR will evaluate the potential for the proposed land uses of the Northside Specific Plan to result in unplanned population or housing growth. As the project will include more housing than is existing, no significant displacement is anticipated.

Public Services: The EIR will identify existing police, fire, schools, parks, and other public services and facilities serving the cities of Riverside and Colton, and will quantify the increase in service demands resulting from implementation of the Northside Specific Plan. The availability and adequacy of existing services will be analyzed.

Recreation: The EIR will discuss the potential to result in the increase in the use of existing recreational facilities that may result in an accelerated physical deterioration of such facilities.

Transportation: The traffic analysis prepared for the Northside Specific Plan and EIR will describe the existing roadway conditions, circulation patterns, and other elements of the transportation system in the planning area, including the local streets and intersections and regional facilities (e.g., SR-91 freeway, I-215 freeway, etc.). A transportation modeling analysis will be prepared in order to evaluate full build-out of the Northside Specific Plan on the overall transportation network. The Northside Specific Plan's compliance with adopted policies, plans, and programs supporting alternative modes of transportation will also be discussed.

Tribal Cultural Resources: The EIR will discuss the potential for impacts to tribal cultural resources, including those qualifying as historical resources.

Utilities/Service Systems: The EIR will discuss the ability of existing infrastructure in the cities of Riverside and Colton, such as sanitary sewer, storm drains, water supply, and solid waste, to serve full buildout of the Northside Specific Plan. The EIR will also discuss the availability of the existing water supply to provide for full buildout of the Northside Specific Plan.

Wildfire: A very high fire severity zone is located to the north of the Specific Plan area. The EIR will discuss the project's potential to impair an emergency response plan, exacerbate wildfire risk, or expose people to secondary effects of wildfire such as slope instability or drainage changes.

Project Alternatives: Identification of potential alternatives to the Northside Specific Plan will be addressed. Analysis of a "No Project" alternative is required by law. Up to three alternatives, in addition to the "No Project-No Build" Alternative, will be evaluated. One Alternative will include Springbrook Heritage Parklands & Walking Trails Plan; while another will examine additional land use changes only on Riverside controlled properties. A third alternative that will be explored will include a hybrid of land uses identified in the proposed project that could reduce environmental impacts. The evaluation of alternatives will provide a comparative analysis of alternatives to the proposed Northside Specific Plan.

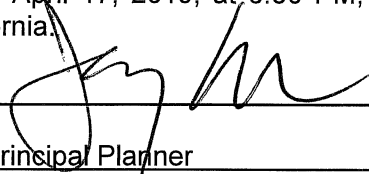
Cumulative Impact Analysis: The EIR will include a discussion of the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the Northside Specific Plan when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

The EIR will identify the degree to which each alternative might reduce one or more of the impacts associated with implementation of the Northside Specific Plan, whether or not the alternative could result in other or increased impacts, the viability of the alternative, and the degree to which the alternative is consistent with project goals and objectives.

COMMENTARY PERIOD: The NOP commentary period is between March 29, 2019 and April 29, 2019. Comments can be mailed to 3900 Main Street, 3rd floor, Riverside, CA 92522 or emailed to jeastman@riversideca.gov to the attention of Jay Eastman.

SCOPING MEETING: The City of Riverside will hold a formal public Scoping Meeting on the above noted project on April 17, 2019, at 6:00 PM, in the Springbrook Clubhouse at 1011 Orange Street, Riverside, California.

SIGNATURE: _____

 JAY EASTMAN

TITLE: _____

Principal Planner

TELEPHONE: _____

951.826.5264

DATE: _____

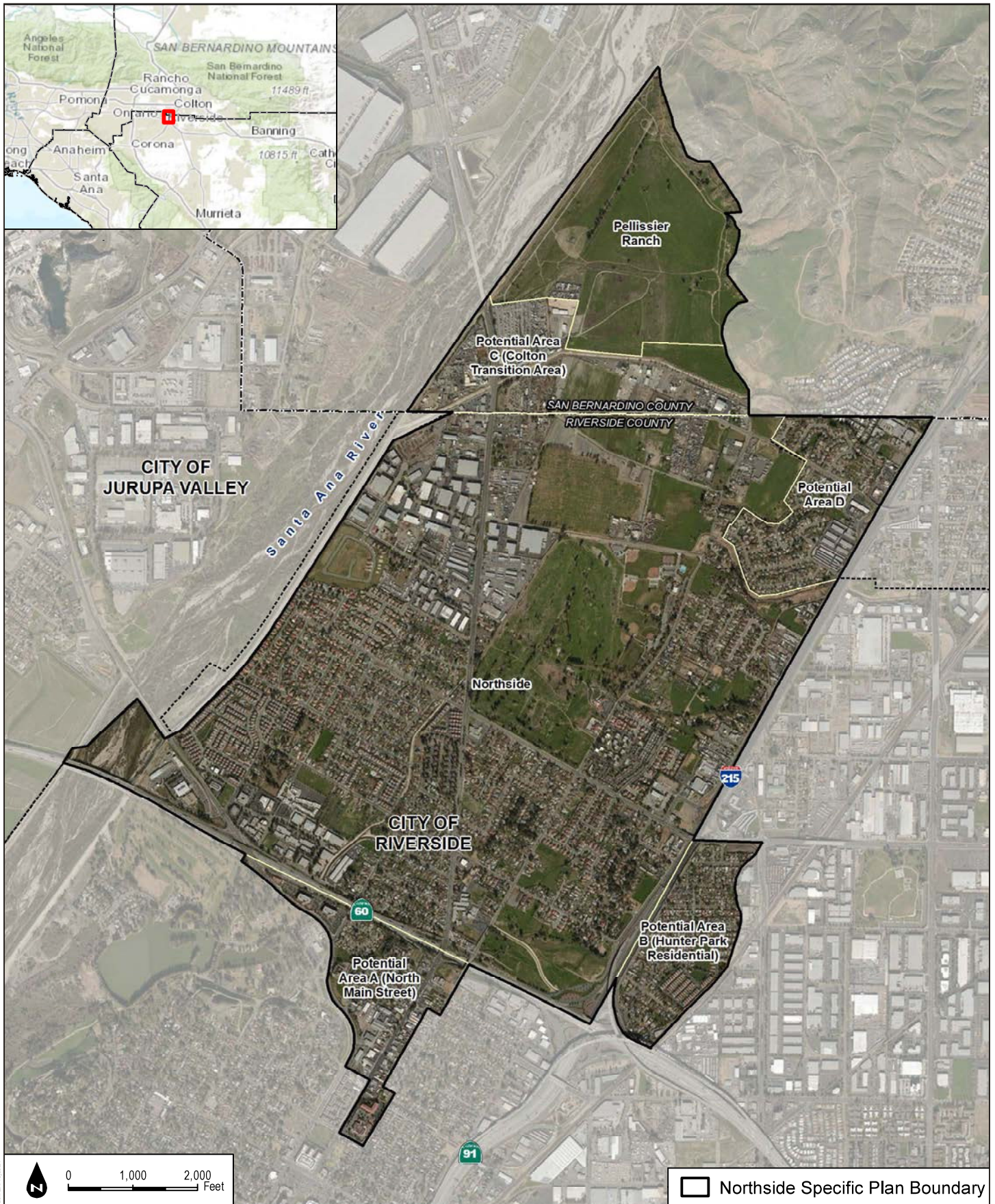
March 29, 2019

ATTACHMENTS:

- Figure 1 – Overview Map
- Figure 2 – Topographic Map
- Figure 3 – Existing General Plan Designations
- Figure 4 – Proposed Specific Plan Land Uses

AVAILABLE AT THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE OFFICE AND ONLINE:

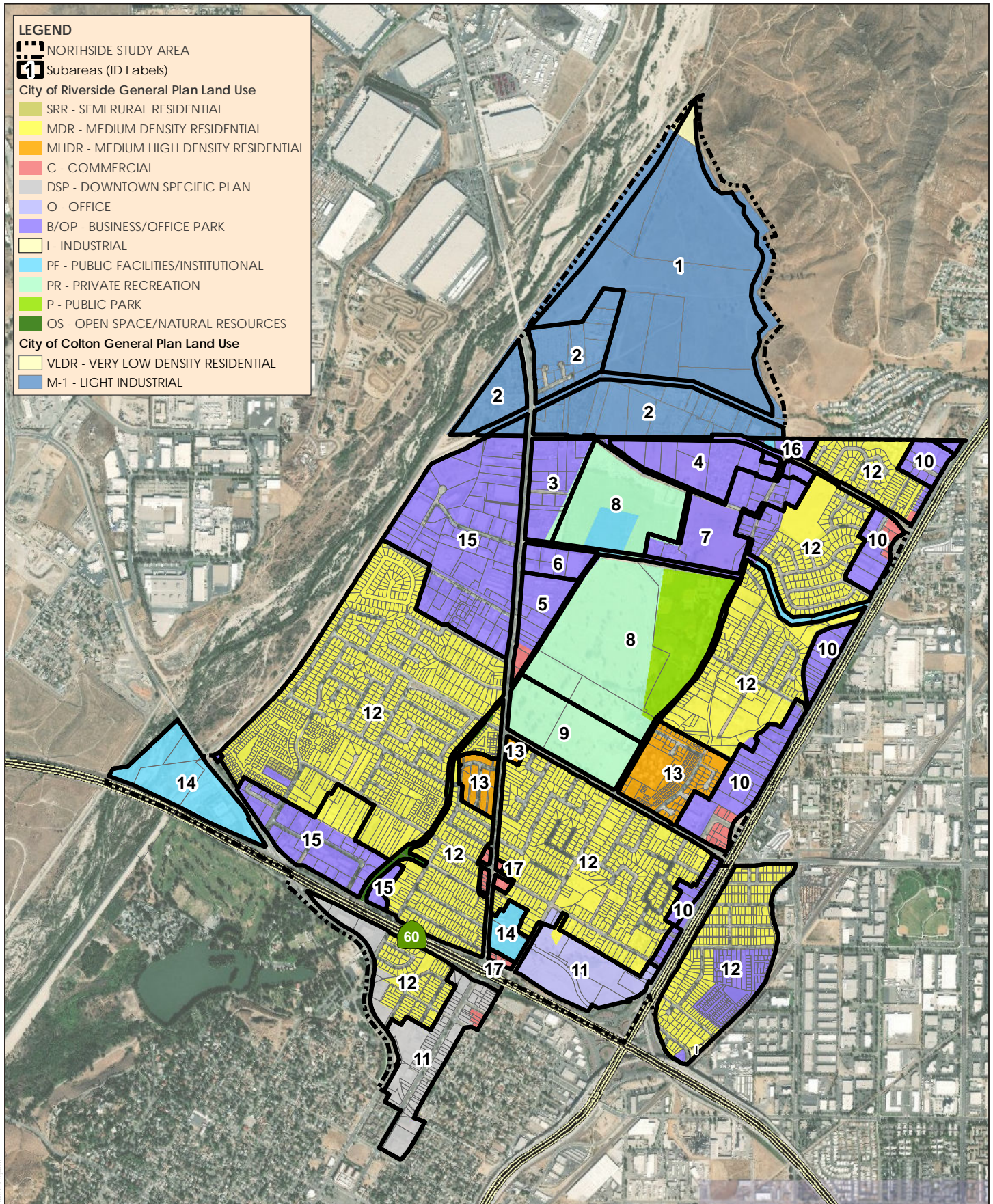
- Distribution List
- Detailed Project Description with Land Use Table
- Initial Study
- Northside Specific Plan Baseline Opportunities & Constraints Analysis



SOURCE: City of Riverside 2017; Bing Maps 2017; ESRI 2017

FIGURE 1

Overview Map
Northside Specific Plan



SOURCE: ESRI World Imagery Baselayer; City of Riverside; City of Colton; County of Riverside; SANBA

FIGURE 3

Existing General Plan Designations
 Northside Specific Plan

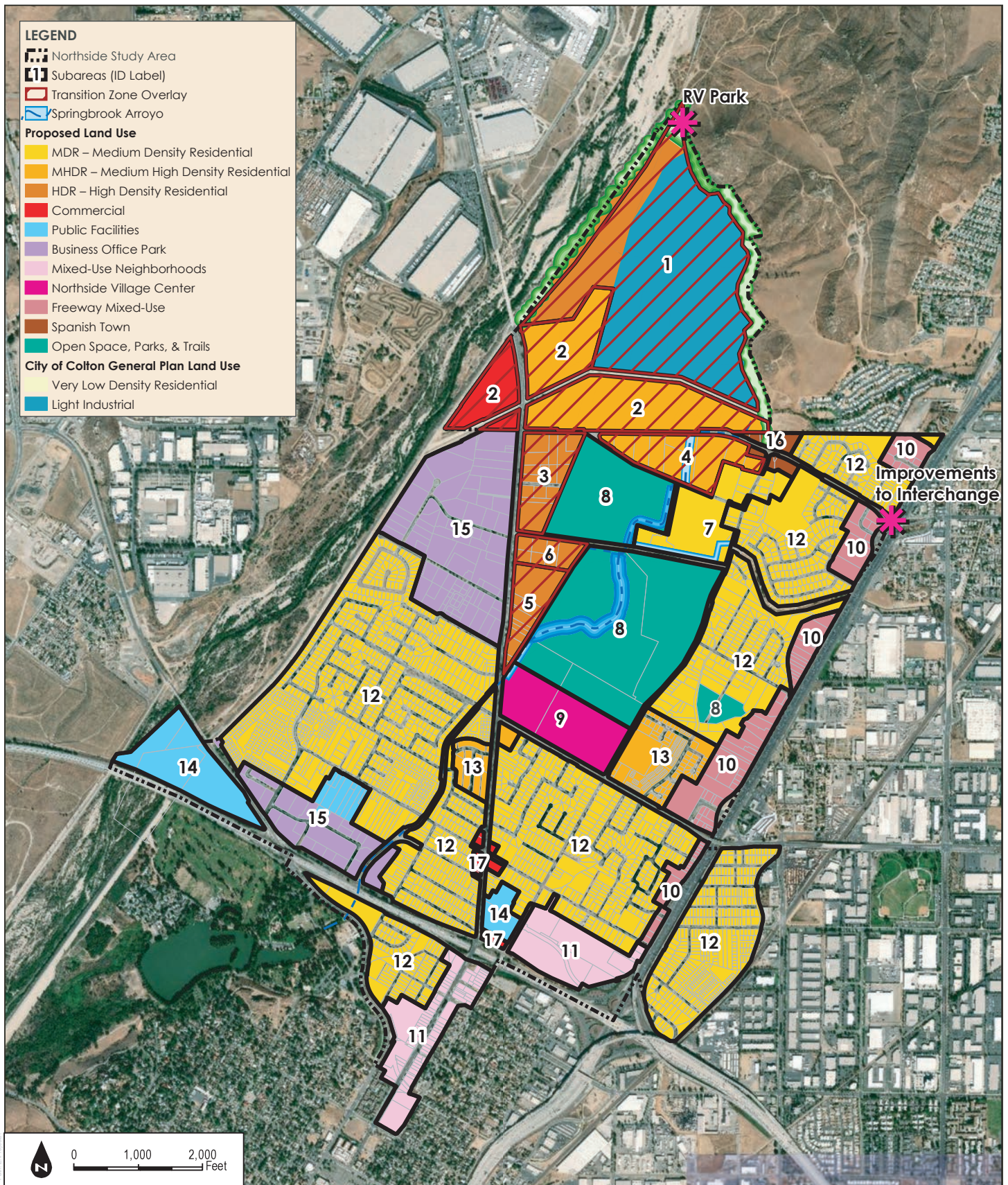


FIGURE 4

Proposed Specific Plan Land Uses
Northside Specific Plan