Notice of Availability of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the Laguna Niguel General Plan Update

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Laguna Niguel (City), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR), SCH #2025050495, for the Laguna Niguel General Plan Update (referred to as the "General Plan Update", "Project" or "proposed Project") pursuant to the State Public Resources Code Section 21165 and the CEQA Guidelines.

PROJECT TITLE: Laguna Niguel General Plan Update

LEAD AGENCY: City of Laguna Niguel

PROJECT LOCATION: Laguna Niguel is located in south Orange County near the Pacific Ocean (refer to Attachment 1, Regional Location Map). The City is approximately 14.7 square miles in land area and surrounded by several local jurisdictions including the City of Dana Point to the south; the City of San Juan Capistrano to the east; the County of Orange (Aliso and Woods Canyon Regional Park) and the City of Laguna Beach to the west; and the cities of Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, and Mission Viejo to the north. The General Plan Update "Planning Area" encompasses the City limits (approximately 9,464 acres) (refer to Attachment 2, General Plan Planning Area).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The City is preparing a comprehensive update to its existing General Plan. The General Plan Update addresses State law requirements and relevant items addressed in Government Code Section 65300 et seq. The General Plan Update will guide the City's development and conservation through a series of goals and policies. The General Plan is intended to be an expression of the community's vision for the City and constitutes the policy and regulatory framework by which future development projects will be reviewed and public improvements will be implemented.

The General Plan Update includes a comprehensive set of goals and policies, organized into the following new elements, including a revised Land Use Map (refer to Attachment 3, General Plan Update Land Use Map).

- Land Use
- Mobility
- Resource Management
- Public Facilities and Services
- Public Safety
- Noise
- Economic Development

The City is not required to include an environmental justice element because there are no identified disadvantaged communities within the City, and the City's 2021-2029 Housing Element was certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on February 22, 2024, and is not part of this General Plan Update.

The goals and policies provide guidance to the City on how to direct change and manage growth, infrastructure, and natural resources over a 20-year planning horizon. The following objectives have been identified for the update to the General Plan:

1. Preserve, protect, and enhance Laguna Niguel's existing residential neighborhoods;
2. Promote residential growth that includes a diverse range of housing development options and densities, ensuring that residents across income levels, age groups, and those with special needs can live within the community;
3. Promote redevelopment in Opportunity Areas that provide economic and community benefits through job creation, enhanced retail and restaurant spaces, and the incorporation of public gathering spaces;
4. Advance economic development policies that support existing local businesses, attract new businesses, promote job growth, and avoid vacant buildings or underutilized commercial sites;
5. Ensure new developments incorporate well-designed site planning, high-quality architecture, and functional outdoor spaces, while ensuring they are compatible with the surrounding setting in terms of land uses, scale, and aesthetics;
6. Ensure new development provides positive fiscal benefit to the City and contributes to new and existing infrastructure;
7. Preserve, protect, and enhance an integrated network of natural and man-made parks and open spaces that supports conservation of natural resources and recreational opportunities;
8. Maintain adequate, reliable, and essential public infrastructure and facilities, including transportation and utilities to support both existing and future development;
9. Maintain a Circulation Plan that fosters a safe and efficient roadway network by minimizing congestion and providing acceptable operation and level of service for vehicles at intersections and roadways; and
10. Maintain and enhance the City's active transportation network to facilitate walking, bicycling, and public transit, improving multimodal connectivity throughout the City.

The General Plan EIR will evaluate the development that could occur within the Planning Area. The General Plan Update identifies three Opportunity Areas—the Marketplace at Laguna Niguel, the Chet Holifield Federal Building (CHFB), and the Town Center—each serving a distinct role that complements the broader community vision. These Opportunity Areas are targeted for considerable growth through the establishment of area-specific overlays. These "Opportunity Area Overlays," which may be applied through separate subsequent legislative actions, provide a pathway for potential redevelopment flexibility in exceedance of the maximum growth permitted

by each base land use designation. Additionally, the General Plan Update includes a Hospitality Overlay for two sites with expansive ocean or territorial views that may be suitable for future high-quality hotel uses. The Hospitality Overlay does not alter underlying land use designations. To realize the development potential of the Hospitality Overlay, would require the approval of a series of separate subsequent legislative actions.

The buildout analysis assumes a 20-year planning horizon, with 2045 as the theoretical full buildout year of the General Plan (the point at which all parcels in the City are developed according to their General Plan land use designation and buildout limit). Therefore, the General Plan EIR analyzes theoretical full buildout under the updated General Plan, including application of the Opportunity Area Overlays (including the potential demolition of the existing CHFB and full redevelopment of the site), and the Hospitality Overlay. Table 1, General Plan Update Growth Assumptions, provides a statistical summary of the growth potential associated with the General Plan Update.

Table 1
General Plan Update Growth Assumptions

	Existing Conditions	Proposed General Plan Update Growth Potential	Net Change (Proposed General Plan Update compared to Existing Conditions)
Residential Units	27,660	31,124	3,464
Managed Care Facility Units	520	520	0
Population	67,734	76,151	8,418
Commercial Square Footage	5,762,761[1]	6,862,257	1,099,496
Public Institutional Square Footage	401,658	401,658	0
Hotel Rooms	33	590	557
Jobs[1]	13,800[2]	19,267	5,467

1. Jobs account for citywide Maximum Development Intensities (MDI) for hospitality (e.g., hotels), public institutional, and managed care uses.
2. The "Existing Conditions" jobs total reflects partial occupancy of CHFB at 200,000 square feet of building area consistent with historic usage.

PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVALS: The City Council is the final decision-making body for the General Plan Update. Before the City Council considers the proposed project, the Planning Commission will review it and make recommendations to the City Council. While other agencies may be consulted during the General Plan Update process, their approval is not required for adoption of the General Plan Update. However, subsequent development under the General Plan Update may require approval of state, federal and responsible trustee agencies that may rely on the programmatic EIR for decisions in their areas of expertise.

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The following environmental impact categories and environmental effects of the General Plan Update are examined in the Draft EIR.

- Aesthetics/Scenic Resources
- Land Use/Planning

- Agriculture/Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildfire

CEQA Guidelines Section 15087(c)(4) requires that the Notice of Availability list the significant environmental effects anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The Draft EIR identified potentially significant impacts in the following area(s): Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology/Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards & Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Noise, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15087, the project area is not listed on any of the hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND DRAFT EIR PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The Draft EIR is available for a public review period of 45 days, beginning August 25, 2025 and ending at 5:00 p.m. on October 8, 2025.

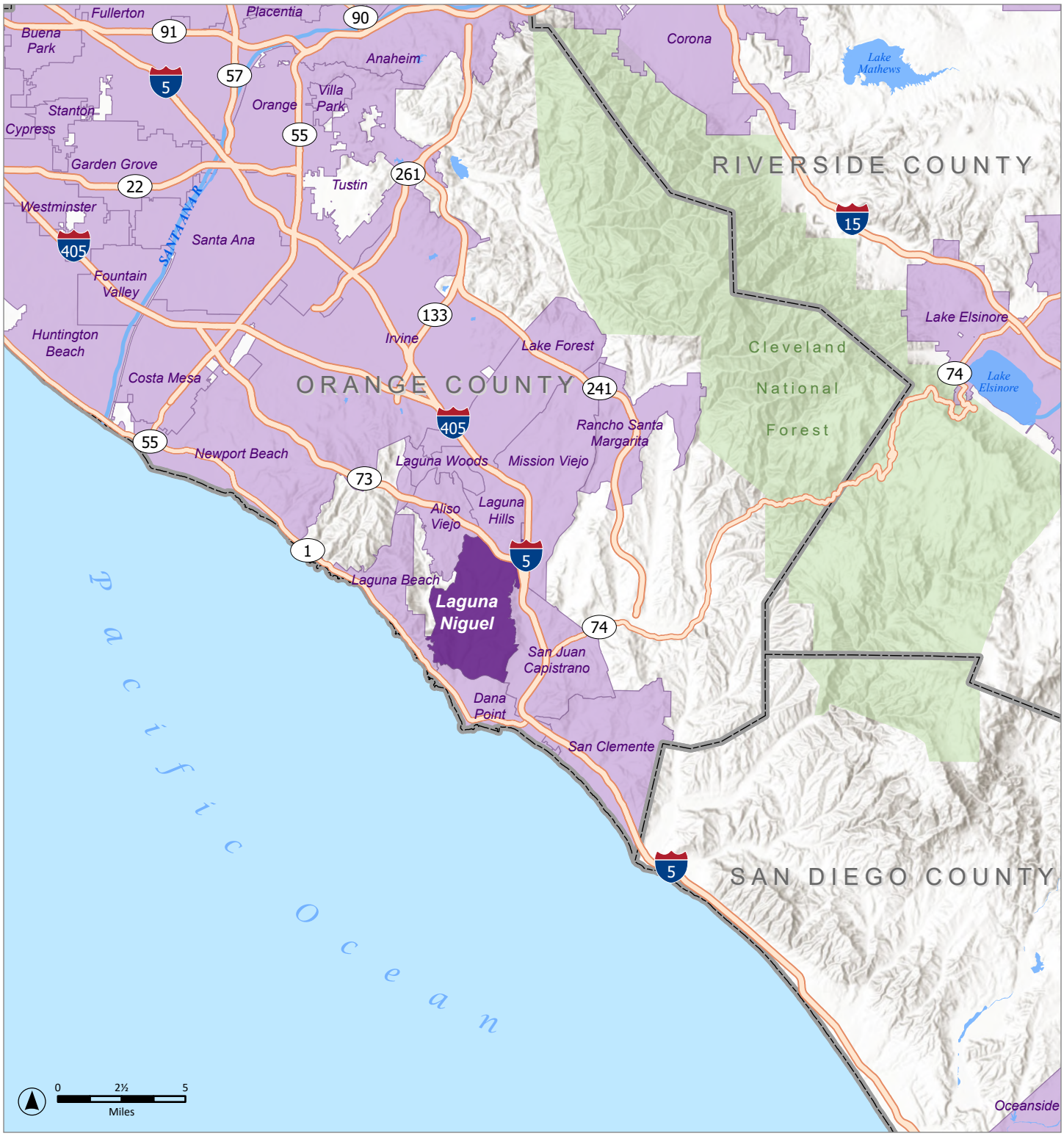
LOCATIONS WHERE DRAFT EIR IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW: Copies of the document are available for review at the following locations and can also be accessed online at: https://lagunaniguel.generalplan.org

City of Laguna Niguel
Community Development Department
30111 Crown Valley Parkway
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

County Library (Laguna Niguel Branch)
30341 Crown Valley Parkway
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

PROVIDING COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIR: Written comments in response to this notice must be received no later than October 8, 2025 at 5:00 PM.

Please address all comments in writing to: Starla Barker, General Plan Update Consultant, City of Laguna Niguel, Community Development Department, 30111 Crown Valley Parkway, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677, or by email to generalplaninfo@cityoflagunaniguel.org. Please include “Laguna Niguel General Plan Update” in the subject line.



Data sources: California State Geoportal; USGS Transportation.

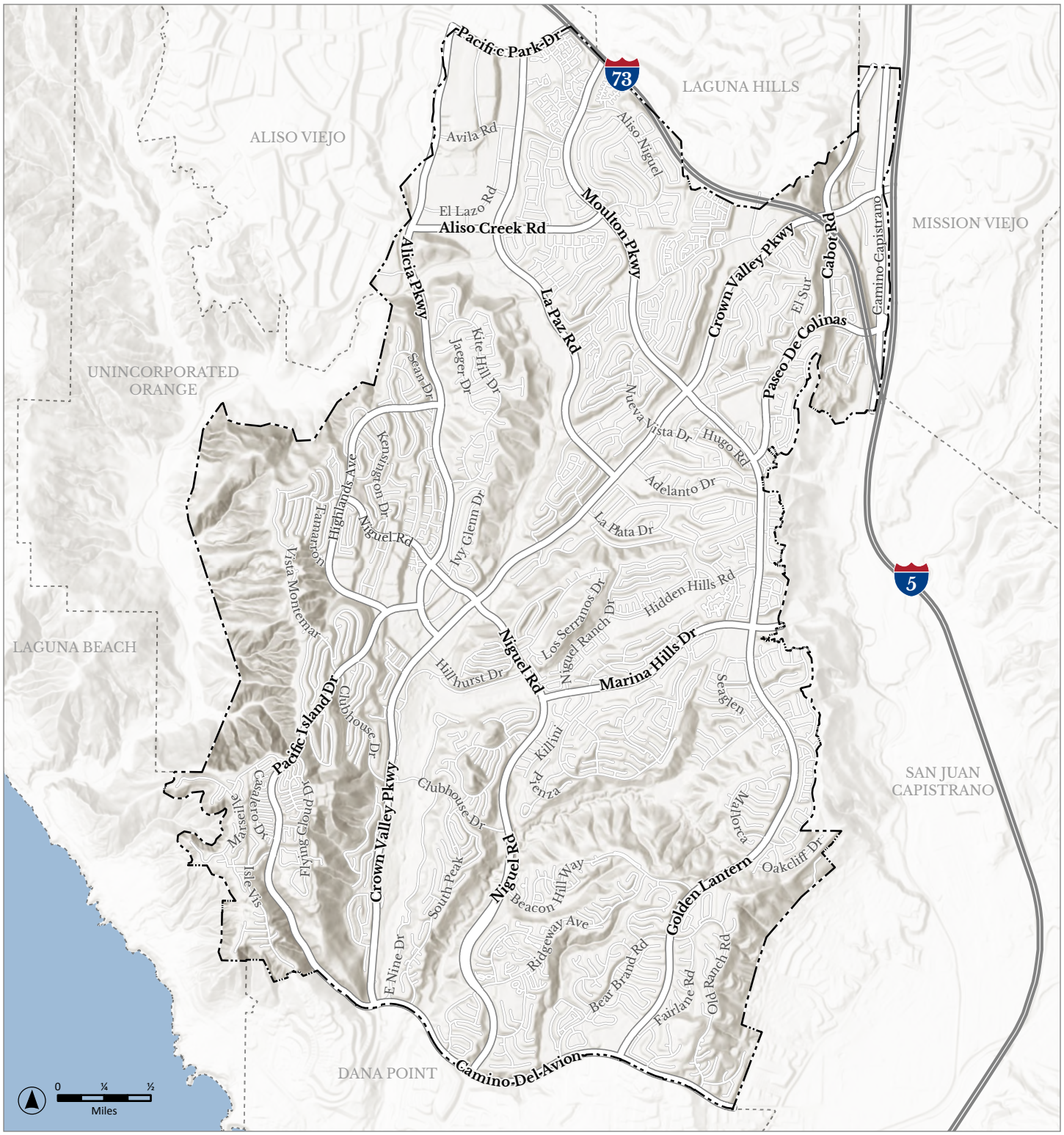
Prepared for the City of Laguna Niguel by De Novo Planning Group
March 13, 2025

LEGEND

- City of Laguna Niguel
- Other Incorporated Areas
- County Boundary
- National Forest

Attachment 1

Regional Location Map



Data sources: City of Laguna Niguel; Orange County GIS.

Prepared for the City of Laguna Niguel by De Novo Planning Group
March 13, 2025.

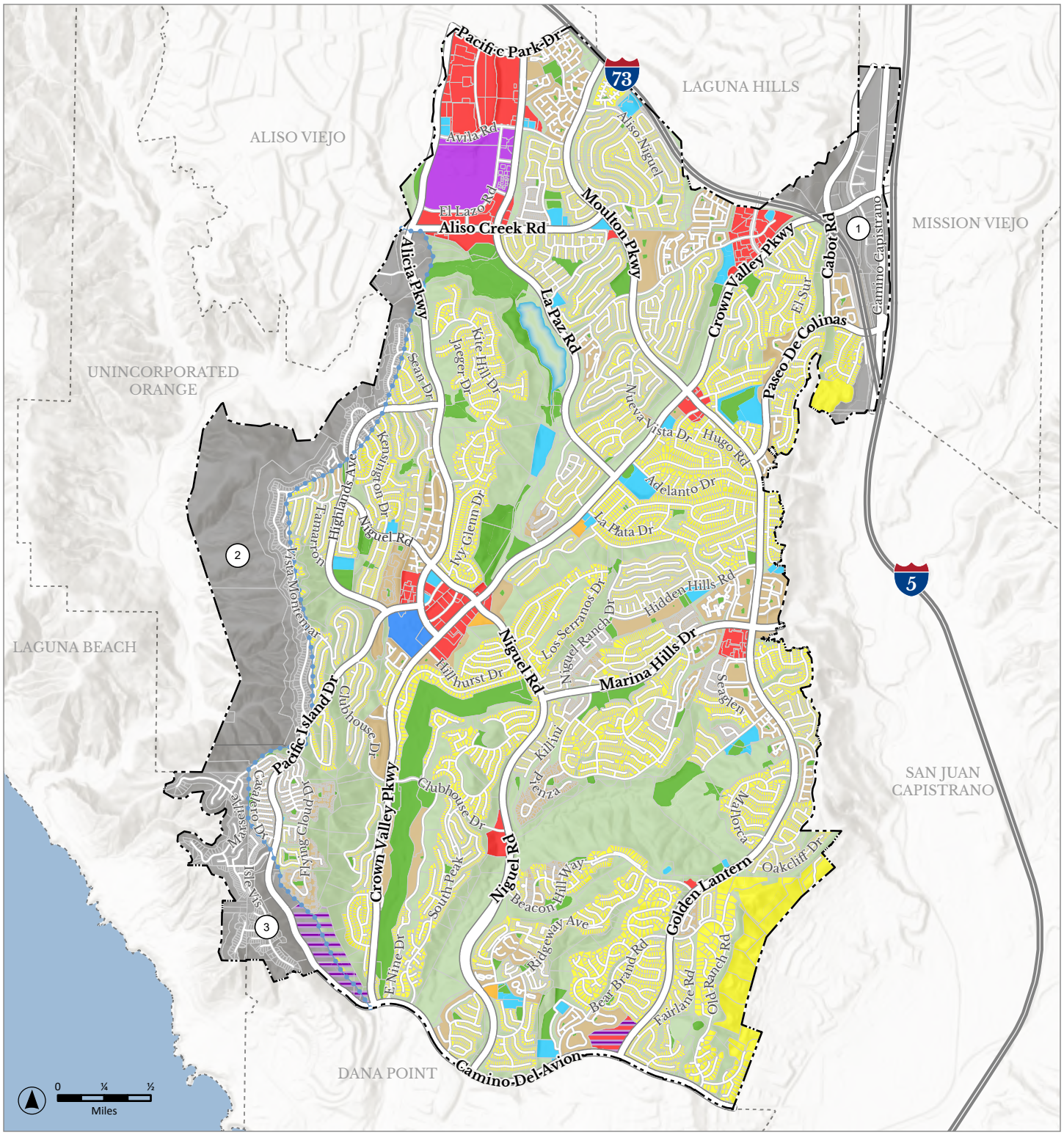
LEGEND

Laguna Niguel City Boundary

Other Jurisdictions

Attachment 2

General Plan Planning Area



Data sources: City of Laguna Niguel Official General Plan Map, 9-11-2023; Orange County GIS.

Prepared for the City of Laguna Niguel by De Novo Planning Group April 15, 2025.

LEGEND

- Laguna Niguel City Boundary
- Laguna Niguel Lake
- Coastal Zone Boundary

General Plan Land Use

- RD: Residential Detached
- RA: Residential Attached
- GC: General Commercial
- BP: Business Park
- MCF: Managed Care Facility
- PR: Parks and Recreation
- OS: Open Space
- PI: Public Institutional
- CC: Civic Center
- (#) SP: Specific Plan
  1. Laguna Niguel Gateway Specific Plan
  2. Aliso Creek Specific Plan/Local Coastal Program
  3. South Laguna Specific Plan/Local Coastal Program

Overlays

- Opportunity Area Overlay 1
- Opportunity Area Overlay 2
- Opportunity Area Overlay 3
- Hospitality Overlay

Attachment 3

General Plan Update Land Use Map