City of San Bernardino

Community Development & Housing Department | Planning Division

Date:	July 21, 2025
To:	State Clearinghouse, State Responsible Agencies, State Trustee Agencies, Other Public Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties
From:	City of San Bernardino
Subject:	Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting
Project:	City of San Bernardino General Plan Update, Development Code Update, and Downtown Specific Plan
Lead Agency:	City of San Bernardino
Scoping Meeting:	The Scoping Meeting will be held on July 30, 2025, beginning at 6:00 p.m., at City of San Bernardino City Hall, 201 North E Street, 3rd Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92401
Contact:	Travis Martin; Principal Planner
Address:	Community Development & Housing Department – Planning Division 201 North E Street, 3rd Floor San Bernardino, CA 92401
Phone:	(909) 384-5313
Email:	martin_tr@sbcity.org

NOTICE OF PREPARATION: Pursuant to the California Public Resources Code Section 21165 and the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines) Section 15050, the City of San Bernardino (City) is the Lead Agency responsible for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addressing potential impacts associated with the City of San Bernardino General Plan Update, Development Code Update, and Downtown Specific Plan Project (proposed project), described below. In compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of San Bernardino is sending this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to responsible agencies, interested parties, and trustee agencies that may be affected by the project.

PROJECT SUMMARY: The proposed project encompasses three related planning efforts that will be analyzed under this EIR: the City's General Plan Update, Development Code Update, and a Downtown Specific Plan for Downtown San Bernardino.

- **General Plan Update:** The City's General Plan is a planning document that represents the community's vision for its future. It meets the requirements of California State law for each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan (Govt. Code Section 65300). The City will use the goals and policies of the General Plan as a basis from which to make their land use, housing, mobility, infrastructure, and open space and parks decisions. The City has selected the year 2050 as its planning horizon.

- **Downtown Specific Plan:** The Specific Plan proposes a set of focused strategies to transform Downtown San Bernardino into a vibrant and livable center of community identity and activity. The Specific Plan would include a vision statement, objectives, and planning principles; land use, mobility, and infrastructure plans; development standards; design guidelines; an implementation plan; and an economic development strategy.

- **Development Code Update:** The Development Code Update proposes changes to the City's existing Development Code (SBMC Title 19). This update consists of a review and update of administrative procedures, land use zone and district designations, development and design standards, and an updated zoning map that implements the proposed Land Use Plan under the General Plan Update.

PROJECT LOCATION: The location of the proposed project consists of both the entirety of the City of San Bernardino and its sphere of influence (SOI), which forms the geographic scope of the General Plan and Development Code Updates, and a 621-acre portion of the downtown, which encompasses the Downtown Specific Plan Area. The location of the citywide planning area and Downtown Specific Plan Area are discussed separately below:

- **Citywide Area:** The City of San Berardino encompasses approximately 62 square miles in the center of the urbanized Valley Region of San Bernardino County, as shown on Figure 1, *Citywide Project Area*. It is approximately 60 miles east of the City of Los Angeles in the upper Santa Ana River Valley. The city is framed by several major geographical features, including the San Bernardino Mountains to the northeast and east, the Blue Mountains and the Box Springs Mountains to the south, the Cajon Wash to the west, and the San Gabriel Mountains and the Jurupa Hills to the northwest and southwest, respectively. San Bernardino borders the Cities of Rialto to the west, Colton to the southwest, Loma Linda to the south, Redlands to the southeast, Highland to the east, and the San Bernardino National Forest to the north.

- **Downtown Area:** The Downtown Specific Plan Area consists of approximately 621 acres in Downtown San Bernardino that stretches from east of I-215 until Sierra Way, and from 8th Street to the railroad tracks south of Rialto Avenue. It encompasses several city landmarks, including City Hall, the 43-acre City-owned former Carousel Mall Site, the County Government Center, Meadowbrook Park, and the City Transit Center. The boundaries of the Specific Plan Area are depicted in Figure 2, Downtown Specific Plan Project Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The following provides a summary of the proposed changes under the General Plan Update and Development Code Update and the major components of the Downtown Specific Plan.

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE: Updates to the City's existing 2005 General Plan would consist of changes to comply with State housing mandates; conform with new State laws related to community health, environmental justice, climate adaptation, resiliency, and mobility; and bring long-term growth and fiscal projections into alignment with current economic conditions and State mandates.

- **Land Use:** designates the general distribution and intensity of land uses in the city and provides general development guidelines and policy direction for the use and development of land within the city. The Land Use Element will also incorporate design guidelines and other urban design measures previously housed in the city's Community Design Element.

- **Economic Development:** addresses the economic outlook of San Bernardino, provides opportunities to strengthen the economy, promotes education and workforce development, and presents strategies to enhance the city's financial health.

- **Circulation and Mobility:** identifies the location and extent of existing and proposed major transportation facilities, including roads, rail, transit systems, and airports. Also addresses opportunities to expand bicycling and pedestrian routes as part of complete streets.

- **Public Facilities and Services:** addresses police and fire protection, libraries and educational facilities, health and medical facilities, and other public services that serve the city.

- **Parks, Recreation, and Trails:** sets the framework for identifying, preserving, and enhancing open space resources, parks, and recreational assets.

- **Utilities and Infrastructure:** provides guidance for the provision of clean water, sanitation services, energy, waste collection, and communication services in the city.

- **Public Safety:** addresses geologic and seismic hazards, hazardous materials, emergency preparedness and response, wind hazards, wildfire hazards, flooding hazards, and climate change-related hazards in the city.

- **Cultural Resources:** addresses the enhancement and preservation of the city's historic, paleontological, archaeological, and creative art resources.

- **Open Space and Conservation:** provides guidance for the preservation, use, and enhancement of the city's natural resources, biological resources, water resources, mineral resources, and air quality.

- **Noise:** identifies and appraises stationary and mobile noise sources in the community, identifies and assesses noise-impacted areas, and includes policies to protect the city from excessive noise.

- **Health and Environmental Justice:** addresses environmental justice issues related to adequate housing, public facilities and services, workforce opportunities, pollution burden, public safety, food, active living, and other issues affecting public health.

- **Housing:** The 2021-2029 San Bernardino Housing Element was certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development and adopted by the City on February 21, 2024, and will not be amended as part of the proposed project.

The City's Land Use Plan is a key component of the General Plan Update that will drive growth in San Bernardino over the next 25 years. The proposed Land Use Plan intends to focus growth and development inward through infill and intensification of vacant and underutilized properties within San Bernardino's existing urbanized areas, while preserving the uses and densities of its established residential neighborhoods and open spaces. Changes to the City's existing Land Use Plan include new designations, including several new mixed-use categories, in addition to changes to the densities/intensities allowed under existing designations.

Figure 3, *Existing General Plan Land Use Map*, and Figure 4, *Proposed General Plan Land Use Map*, illustrate the City's existing Land Use Plan and the proposed General Plan Land Use Plan, respectively.

Table 1, *General Plan Buildout Statistical Summary*, provides a statistical summary of the buildout potential associated with the General Plan Update compared to existing conditions. Primary growth under the General Plan Update is anticipated to occur in the downtown area, where the Specific Plan (discussed below) concentrates new retail, office, government, and housing use in a pedestrian-oriented environment.

TABLE 1 GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Scenario	Housing Units	Population	Nonresidential Square Feet	Employment
Existing Conditions (2025)	77,051	267,267	101,575,944	111,690
Proposed General Plan (2050)	112,991	330,982	142,744,306	172,190
Potential Growth	**35,940**	**63,624**	**41,168,362**	**60,500**

DOWNTOWN SAN BERARDINO SPECIFIC PLAN. The Specific Plan defines the City's vision for the downtown, defines and describes nine downtown Land Use Districts, establishes a land use plan for future development of the nine districts, provides development standards for each district, and discusses circulation and infrastructure plans for the Specific Plan Area. The nine proposed Land Use Districts would become the new land use designations and zoning districts for all development within the Downtown Specific Plan Area. These districts consist of the Downtown Neighborhoods, North Gateway, Freeway Commercial, Transit Neighborhood, Downtown Core, County Center,

Parkview Campus, Railside, and Transit Center, as shown in Figure 5, Proposed Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Districts.

Table 2, *Total Development in the Specific Plan Area*, shows the extent of existing development and the proposed new development resulting from full development of the Specific Plan. The Downtown Specific Plan would result in the net addition of up to 14,152 new residential units and 11,732,858 square feet of nonresidential space.

TABLE 2 TOTAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

District Area	Existing Residential Units	New Residential Units	TOTAL	Existing Non-Residential (square feet)	New Non-Residential (square feet)	TOTAL (square feet)
Downtown Neighborhood	776	971	1,747	1,146,787	63,630	1,210,417
North Gateway	173	1,505	1,678	392,335	409,812	802,147
Freeway Commercial	24	0	24	89,279	191,649	280,928
Transit Neighborhood	342	5,872	6,214	310,781	3,288,686	3,599,467
Downtown Core	0	3,768	3,768	1,219,479	4,689,452	5,908,931
County Center	0	0	0	551,547	1,057,332	1,608,879
Parkview Campus	0	1,184	1,184	25,983	662,978	688,961
Railside	0	262	262	71,595	854,961	926,556
Transit Center	0	590	590	32,663	514,357	547,020
TOTAL	**1,315**	**14,152**	**15,467**	**3,840,449**	**11,732,857**	**15,573,306**

DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE. Title 19 (Land Use/ Subdivision Regulations) of the San Bernardino Municipal Code is the primary tool for implementing the goals, objectives, and policies of the Land Use Element, pursuant to the mandated provisions of the State Planning and Zoning Law (Government Code Section 65000 et seq.), CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), and other applicable State and local requirements. The zoning regulations, including development standards, permits and procedures, zones, and zone descriptions, that are contained in Title 19 would be revised to be consistent with the exhibits and text of the General Plan Update.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 allows environmental issues, for which there is no likelihood of significant impact, to be "scoped out" and not analyzed further in the EIR. Given the diversity of environmental settings across the city, all environmental topics will be analyzed in this Draft EIR, as shown below.

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services
- Parks and Recreation

- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildfire

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties, including members of the public, must submit any comments in response to this notice no later than 30 days after receipt. The NOP is available for a 30-day public review period beginning July 21, 2025, and ending August 19, 2025.

RESPONSES AND COMMENTS: The City will accept written comments only during the public review period. Please indicate a contact person for your agency or organization and send your written comments to:

Attn: Travis Martin, Principal Planner
City of San Bernardino
Community Development & Housing Department – Planning Division
201 North E Street, 3rd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92401
Email: martin_tr@sbcity.org

SCOPING MEETING: As a part of the NOP process, the City will conduct a public Scoping Meeting to present the proposed project and environmental process and to receive public comments and suggestions regarding the proposed project. The Scoping Meeting will be held on July 30, 2025, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at City of San Bernardino City Hall, 201 North E Street, 3rd Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92401.

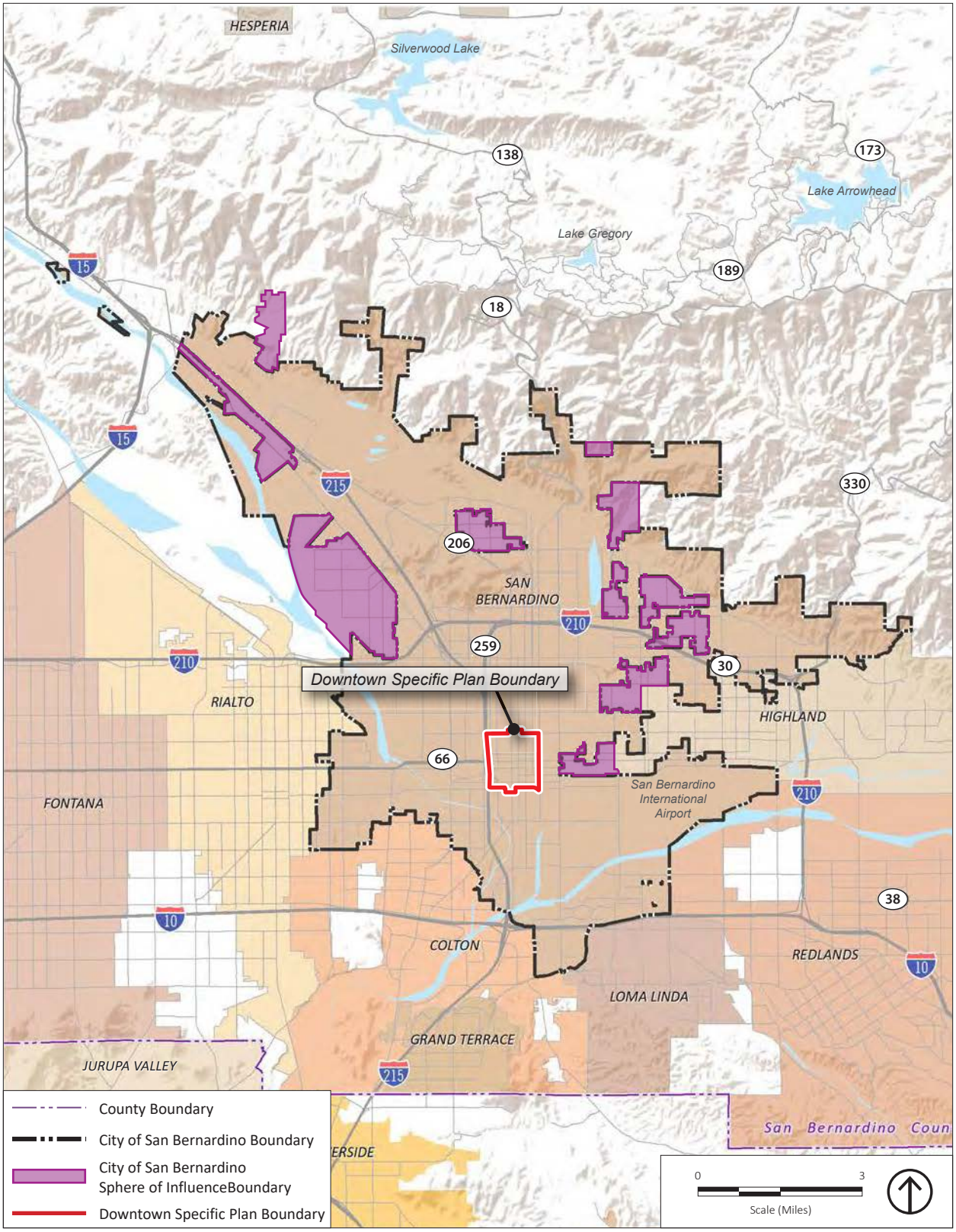
The Scoping Meeting will include a presentation describing the proposed project, followed by an opportunity for members of the public to comment on environmental topics that should be analyzed in the EIR.

Additional information about the proposed project is available at the following City webpage: https://futuresb2050.com

Note to Reviewers: An NOP for the Downtown Specific Plan was previously circulated on July 19, 2022. Following publication of this NOP, the proposed project was revised to include additional components, the City's General Plan and Development Code Updates, that would be adopted simultaneously with the Downtown Specific Plan. This NOP supersedes the previous NOP issued for the Downtown Specific Plan and the City requests that individuals and agencies provide comment letters and/or input on the proposed project as described in this NOP.

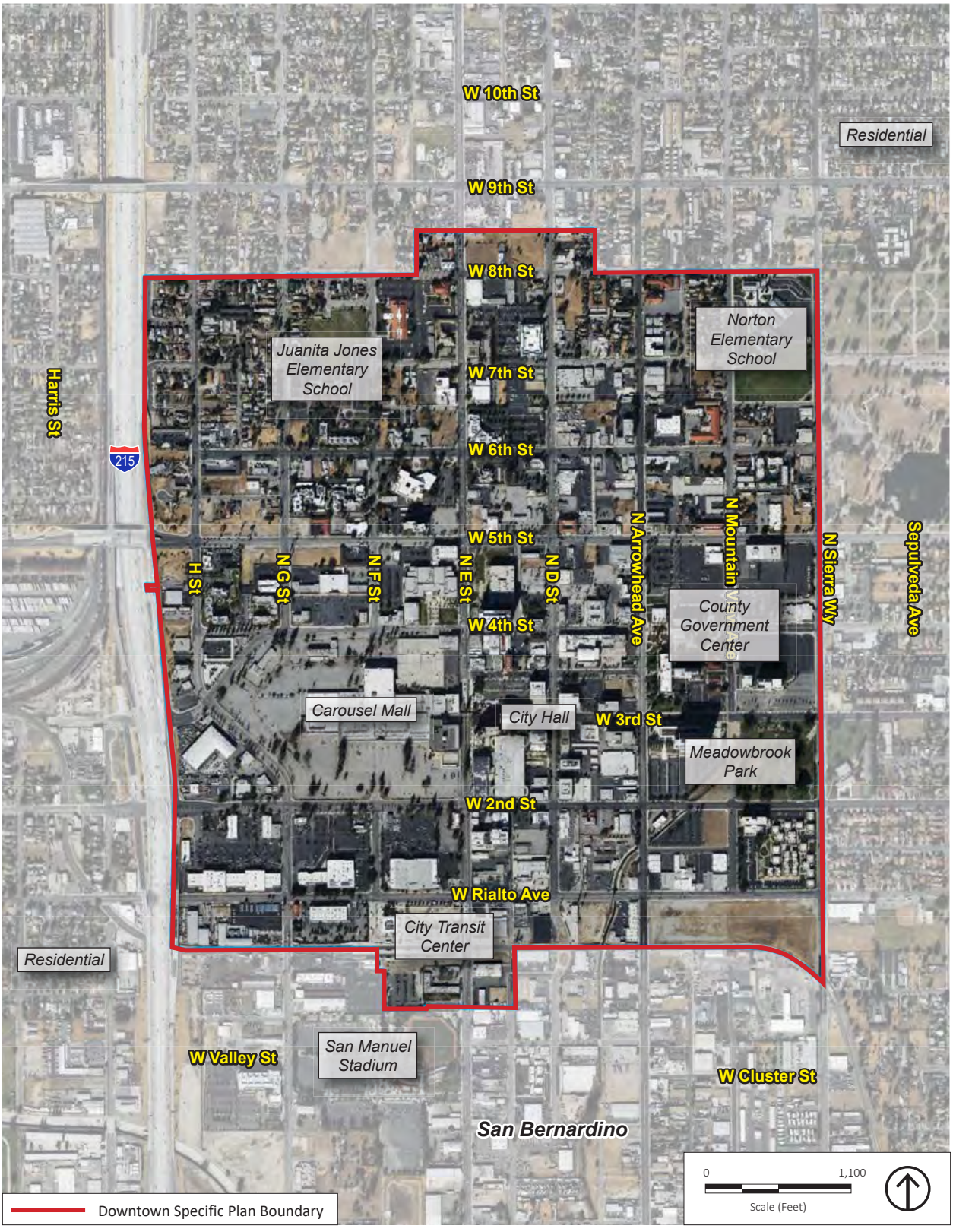
Attachments:

- Figure 1: Citywide Project Area
- Figure 2: Downtown Specific Plan Project Area
- Figure 3: Existing General Plan Land Use Map
- Figure 4: Proposed General Plan Land Use Map
- Figure 5: Proposed Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Districts



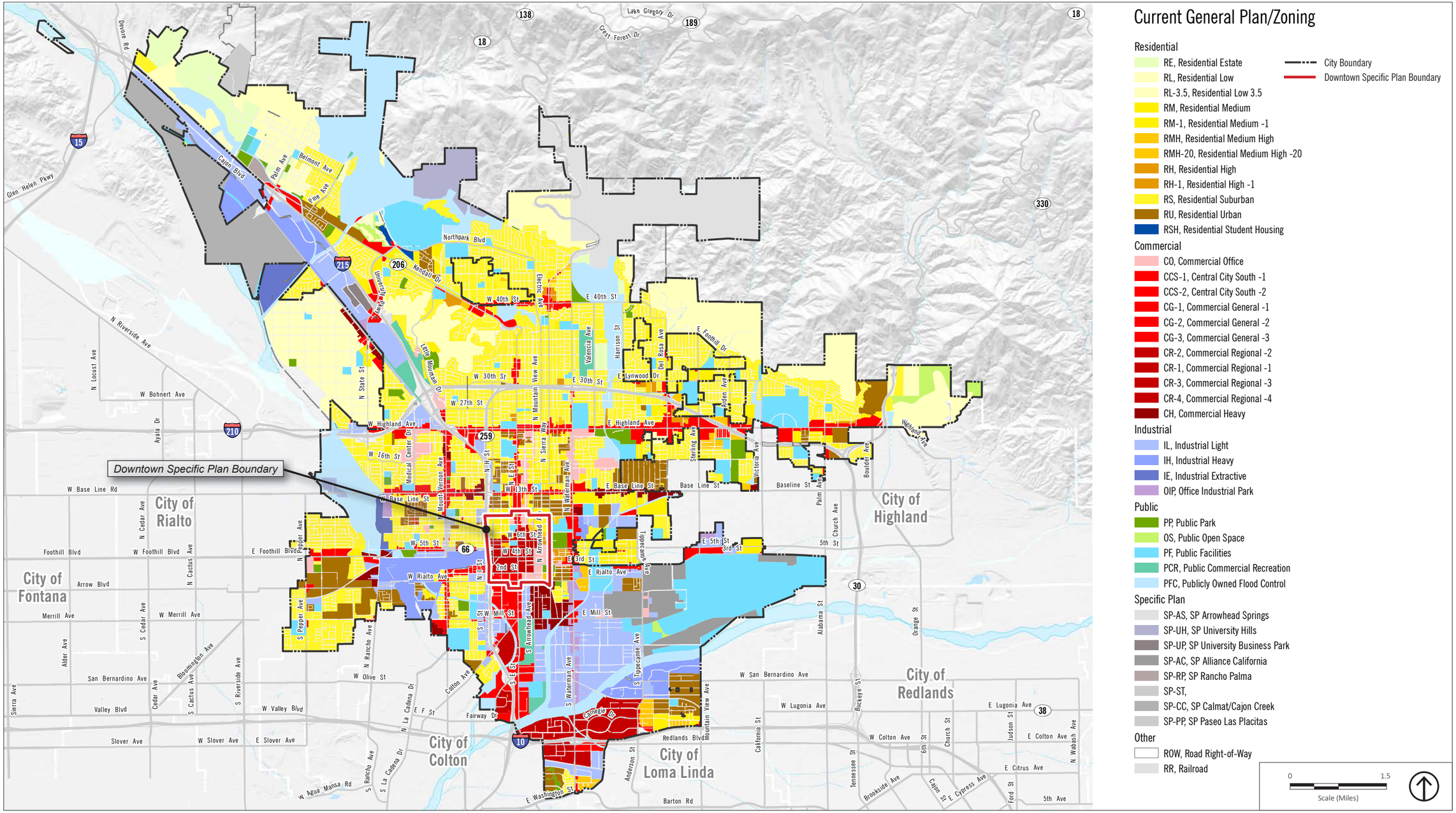
Source: Generated using ArcMap 2022.

Figure 1
Citywide Project Area



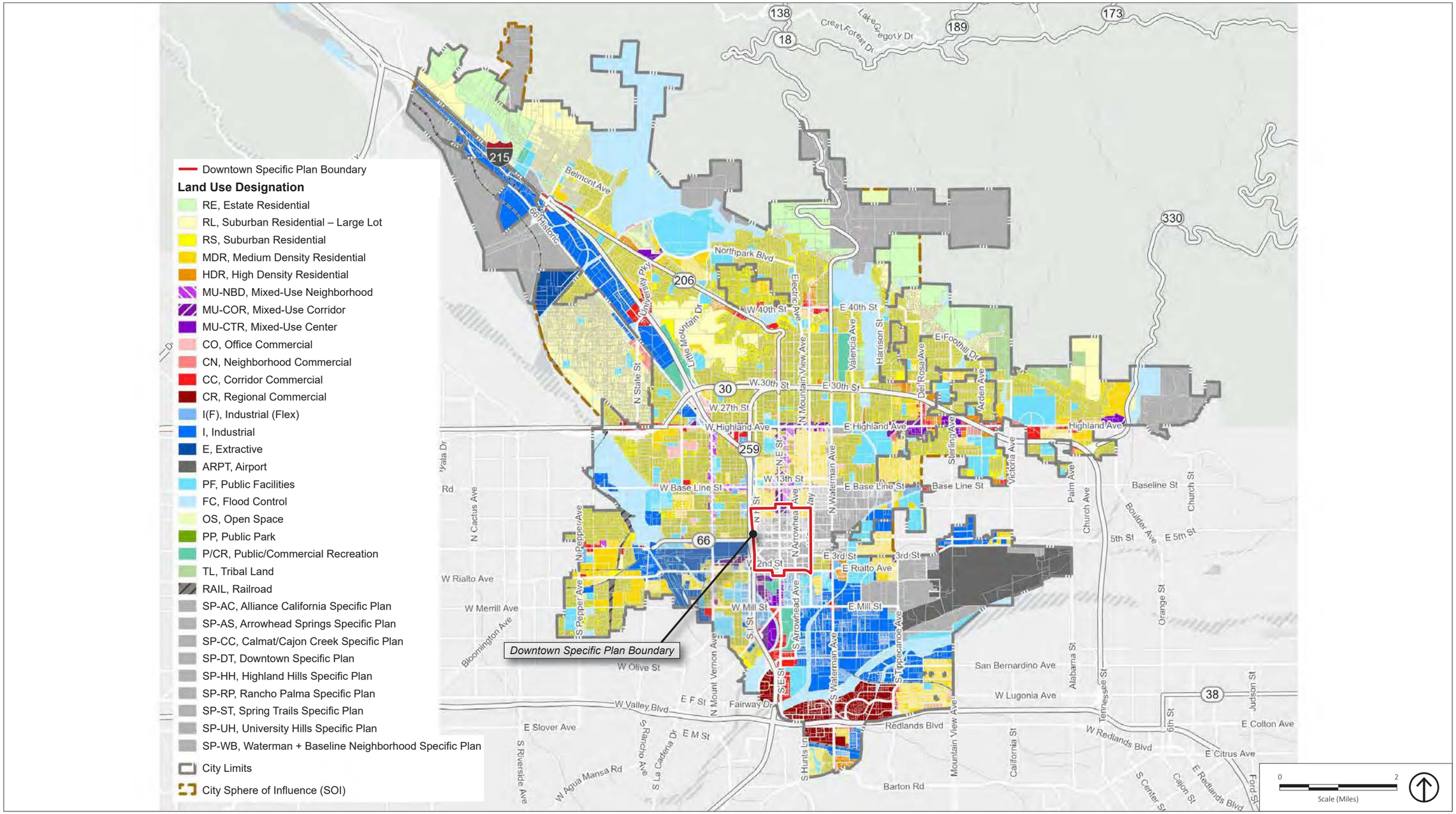
Source: Generated using ArcMap 2025.

Figure 2
Downtown Specific Plan Project Area



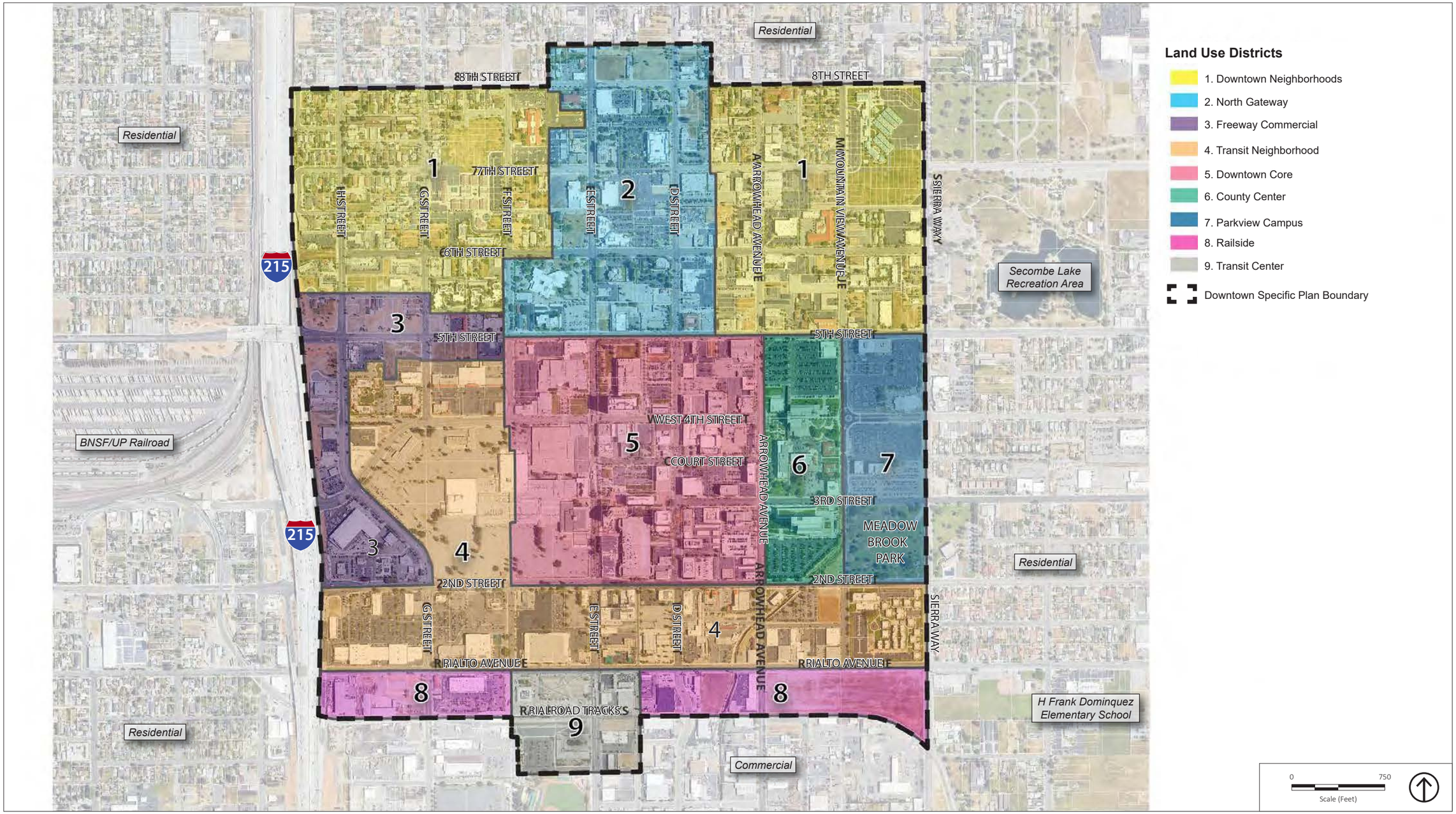
Source: PlaceWorks 2021.

Figure 3
Existing General Plan Land Use Map



Source: PlaceWorks 2025.

Figure 4
Proposed General Plan Land Use Map



Source: PlaceWorks 2023.

Figure 5
Proposed Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Districts