

NOTICE OF PREPARATION
of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report
Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

Project: Santee Town Center Specific Plan Update

Project Case Files: General Plan Amendment GPA2023-1, Town Center Specific Plan Amendment TCSPA2023-1, Rezone 2023-1, Zoning Ordinance Amendment ZA2023-2, Environmental Impact Report AEIS2023-2

Project Proponent: City of Santee

Project Location: Town Center, Arts & Entertainment Overlay District, Strategic Housing Element Sites 16A, 16B, 20A, 20B (refer to Table 1 and Figure 2)

Environmental Impact Report: The City of Santee is preparing a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addressing a comprehensive update to the City of Santee Town Center Specific Plan (TCSP), including updates to the Santee Arts & Entertainment Overlay District (AEOD), and conceptual planning and objective design standards for four large strategic housing sites, which were analyzed programmatically within the Sixth Cycle Housing Element EIR. The City will be the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the project. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) describes the proposed project that will be analyzed in the Program EIR and identifies areas of probable environmental effects of the project.

As specified in the CEQA Guidelines, the Notice of Preparation will be circulated for a 30-day review period. Agencies, organizations, and interested members of the public are invited to provide input on the scope of the environmental analysis. If you are a responsible or trustee agency, the views of your agency are requested 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. In the event that no response or well justified request for additional time is received by any responsible agency or trustee agency by the end of the review period, we presume that these agencies have no response. Comments may be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

Michael Coyne, Principal Planner
City of Santee Planning & Building Department
10601 Magnolia Avenue
Santee, CA 92071
Telephone: (619) 258-4100 ext. 160
Email: mcoyne@cityofsanteeca.gov

The Notice of Preparation comment period commences September 1, 2023 and closes at 5:00 p.m. on October 16, 2023. All comments concerning this environmental document must be submitted in writing to Michael Coyne, Principal Planner, prior to the close of the public comment period as noted above. Please indicate a contact person in your comment. The City will consider all written comments received during the noticed public review period prior to approving the project.

Public Scoping Meeting:

The City will hold a scoping meeting to provide an opportunity for agency staff and interested members of the public to submit comments, either written or verbal, on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the Program EIR. The scoping meeting will be held on September 7, 2023 between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. at the City of Santee, Building 5, 10601 Magnolia Avenue, Santee, CA 92071.

Project Background:

In October 1986, the City of Santee completed a focused effort to plan for the development of property in its geographic core known as the Town Center Specific Plan (TCSP). The TCSP establishes guidelines for creating a people- and transit-oriented hub for commercial, civic, and residential uses along the San Diego River. Since its adoption, the TCSP has been amended 16 times, with the latest amendment, Amendment 19-1 adopted in December 2019, establishing the AEOD. The primary goal of the AEOD is to support tourism in the City and attract commercial, educational, and recreational uses that beautify and enliven portions of the Town Center.

More recently, on July 14, 2021, the City Council adopted the Sixth Cycle Housing Element, which included within its Sites Inventory four strategic housing sites (Sites 16A, 16B, 20A, 20B) within the TCSP area that were identified as sites intended to be developed with transit-oriented multifamily residential uses that support the inclusion of affordable housing. The City has also recently adopted a few other plans that are relevant to ongoing planning in the TCSP area, including the Sustainable Santee Plan, the City of Santee Mobility Element, and the Active Santee Plan.

Proposed Project:

The proposed project consists of a comprehensive update to the TCSP to modify or establish new land use designations, land uses, development standards, and conceptual guidelines that would apply to future development within the TCSP area. As part of this effort, the City of Santee would also make modifications to the Arts & Entertainment District and provide objective design standards and conceptual designs for strategic Housing Element sites within the TCSP. See Figure 1, *Regional Location*, and Figure 2, *Project Boundaries*, for illustrations of the location and regional context of the project. A more detailed description of each of the proposed project components is described below.

Town Center Specific Plan

Amendments to the TCSP would incorporate relevant updates to the plan's vision, land use permissions, and development standards. As part of the updates, new text and graphics would be developed and organized into a series of chapters, such as: Introduction, Land Use and Urban Form, Mobility and Beautification, Infrastructure and Public Facilities, Implementation, and Administration. Text and concepts that remain relevant to the vision and goals of the TCSP would be maintained and incorporated into the updated TCSP document format and structure.

The amended TCSP would incorporate updated allowable and permitted land uses and development standards tailored to the project area. The updated TCSP would include graphics that illustrate the planned land use concepts and the plan's vision at key sites. As part of the TCSP, the circulation network exhibits of the plan would be updated, including the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit network maps, and street cross sections. The TCSP would include concepts for key improvements in the public right-of-way to enhance circulation within the project area. The TCSP would incorporate concepts to illustrate wayfinding and branding signage at important locations within the public right-of-way and public trails, such as signs tailored for pedestrian, bicyclists and transit users, signs designed to direct vehicular traffic and refer to parking areas, as well as iconic gateway structures that enhance the identity and sense of place in the project area.

The TCSP would also outline fundamental elements for the administration of the plan, such as the process for future specific plan amendments, and the development review, permit, and approval process for projects within the TCSP area. Additionally, the TCSP would address the relationship between the TCSP document and other planning documents, as well as consistency with the General Plan. The TCSP would also include a section describing how to use the document and guide reviewers and applicants through the path for review and approval of proposals within the TCSP area.

Finally, the TCSP amendment would also incorporate an adjustment to the Specific Plan boundaries to include additional sites such as the shopping center located at the northwest corner of Mission Gorge Road and Cuyamaca Road, and the shopping center located west of Cuyamaca Road, between Mission Creek Drive and River Park Drive. As a result of the boundary adjustment, the TCSP area would expand from 609.70 to 651.42 acres¹. Increasing a total of 41.72 acres.

Arts & Entertainment Overlay District

The TCSP would include an amendment to the AEOD. As discussed above, the City adopted the AEOD in 2019, with the intent of encouraging the development of an Arts & Entertainment district within a significant portion of the TCSP. The update would

¹ The original Town Center Specific Plan published in 1986 cited the TCSP area as 706 acres, however amendments to the plan have reduced the Specific Plan total acreage. Additionally, the original acreage was based on an estimate, due to improved geographic information software over time, the number of reported acres in the TCSP has changed as the accuracy of the data has increased.

incorporate the vision, guidelines, and development standards specific to the AEOD as a subsection of the Land Use and Urban Form chapter of the TCSP. This section of the TCSP would also incorporate tailored land use designations that support uses related to art and culture, entertainment, commercial recreation, visitor, and civic uses.

The update to the vision and development standards for the AEOD would aim to enhance connections to the San Diego River, strengthen the sense of place by creating an attraction for residents and visitors to gather, and public space concepts that would incorporate streetscape concepts with features such as landscaping, water elements, shade, lighting, and wayfinding. The concepts would also aim to create a central destination within the TCSP area, with a strong emphasis on connecting Arts & Entertainment to the natural environment.

Additionally, the update would incorporate an adjustment to the AEOD boundaries to include additional sites such as the open space designated areas along the San Diego River, areas north of the San Diego River, south of Riverwalk Drive, west of River Park Drive, east of Cuyamaca Street, and west of Magnolia Avenue. As a result of the boundary adjustments, the AEOD area would expand from 172.49² to 341.72 acres, increasing by a total of 169.23 acres. See Figures 2 and 3 for more details.

Four Strategic Housing Element Sites (2021-2029 Sixth Cycle)

The City Council adopted the Housing Element (2021-2029 Sixth Cycle) on May 11, 2022. The Housing Element (HE) was prepared in compliance with State housing law as determined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on December 6, 2022. The HE included a Sites Inventory map and table (figure C-1 and table C-1 of the HE), that included a series of sites that are currently undeveloped or underutilized. The identified sites provide an opportunity for the City to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) housing production goals. Four strategic undeveloped housing sites identified in the Sites Inventory are located within the boundary of the TCSP and the AEOD. The sites are identified as 16A, 16B, 20A, and 20B. Sites 16A and 16B are undeveloped sites located just north of Mission Gorge Road and east of Riverview Parkway in the Santee Town Center. The area surrounding the sites is primarily developed with Santee Trolley Square immediately west of the site, the Las Colinas Detention Facility to the east, and open space associated with the San Diego River to the north. A portion of Site 16A is located within the Airport Safety Zone 4 as designated in the Gillespie Field Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). Sites 20A and 20B are undeveloped sites located just west of Magnolia Avenue, south of Riverview Parkway, and east of Edgemoor Drive. Sites 20A and 20B surround the Historic Edgemoor Polo or Dairy Barn. To the west of Site 20A is the Las Colinas Detention Facility, to the east is a gated 55+ manufactured home community. Site 20B is bordered by single-family residential homes to the south, multifamily residential to the east, and Las Colinas and

² The 2019 Art and Entertainment Overlay District refers to 155 acres; however, current GIS data shows 172 acres for the same area.

Riverview Office Park to the west. A portion of the site is located within the Gillespie Field ALUCP Airport Safety Zone 4. The sites are proposed to be developed with residential uses.

The HE Implementation Program identified specific sites that would require to be rezoned to allow for residential uses, and/or to allow for the estimated housing capacity included in the HE. The Housing Element proposed zoning changes for sites 16A, 16B, 20A, and 20B. As part of the realization of the Housing Element Implementation Program, the City analyzed and approved the re-zone of the four above-mentioned sites and adopted the rezoning on October 26, 2022. The zoning for sites 16A, 16B, 20A, and 20B as a result of the HE Implementation Program can be found in Table 1, *Housing Element Sites Zoning*.

Table 1, Housing Element Sites Zoning

Site	Size (acres)	Current Zoning	Current Density
16A	11.11	Residential (TC-R-30)	Minimum of 30 du/ac, Maximum of 36 du/ac
16B	8.61	Residential (TC-R-14)	Minimum of 14 du/ac, Maximum of 22 du/ac
20A	7.75	Residential (TC-R-22)	Minimum of 22 du/ac, Maximum of 30 du/ac
20B	10.00	Residential (TC-R-30)	Minimum of 30 du/ac, Maximum of 36 du/ac

To further advance the housing production in Santee, City staff applied for a Housing Acceleration Program (HAP) grant from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). The grant application was awarded to the City. The HAP grant provides funding for project-level analysis of HE sites 16A, 16B, 20A, and 20B. The amended TCSP will include graphics and data that illustrate site planning and development concepts for each of these sites based on the maximum allowable density allowed by zoning. The EIR will analyze these sites at a project-level of detail.

Discretionary Actions: Discretionary actions associated with the project include a General Plan Amendment GPA2023-1, Town Center Specific Plan Amendment TCSPA2023-1, Rezone 2023-1, Zoning Ordinance Amendment ZA2023-2, Environmental Impact Report AEIS2023-2.

Project Alternatives: The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of project alternatives, including the required No Project Alternative.

Potential Environmental Effects: The EIR will describe the reasonably foreseeable and potentially significant adverse effects of the proposed project (both direct and indirect) at a programmatic level for the TCSP and the AEOD and at a project level for the four Housing Sites. The EIR also will evaluate the cumulative impacts of the project when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The City anticipates that the proposed project could result in potentially

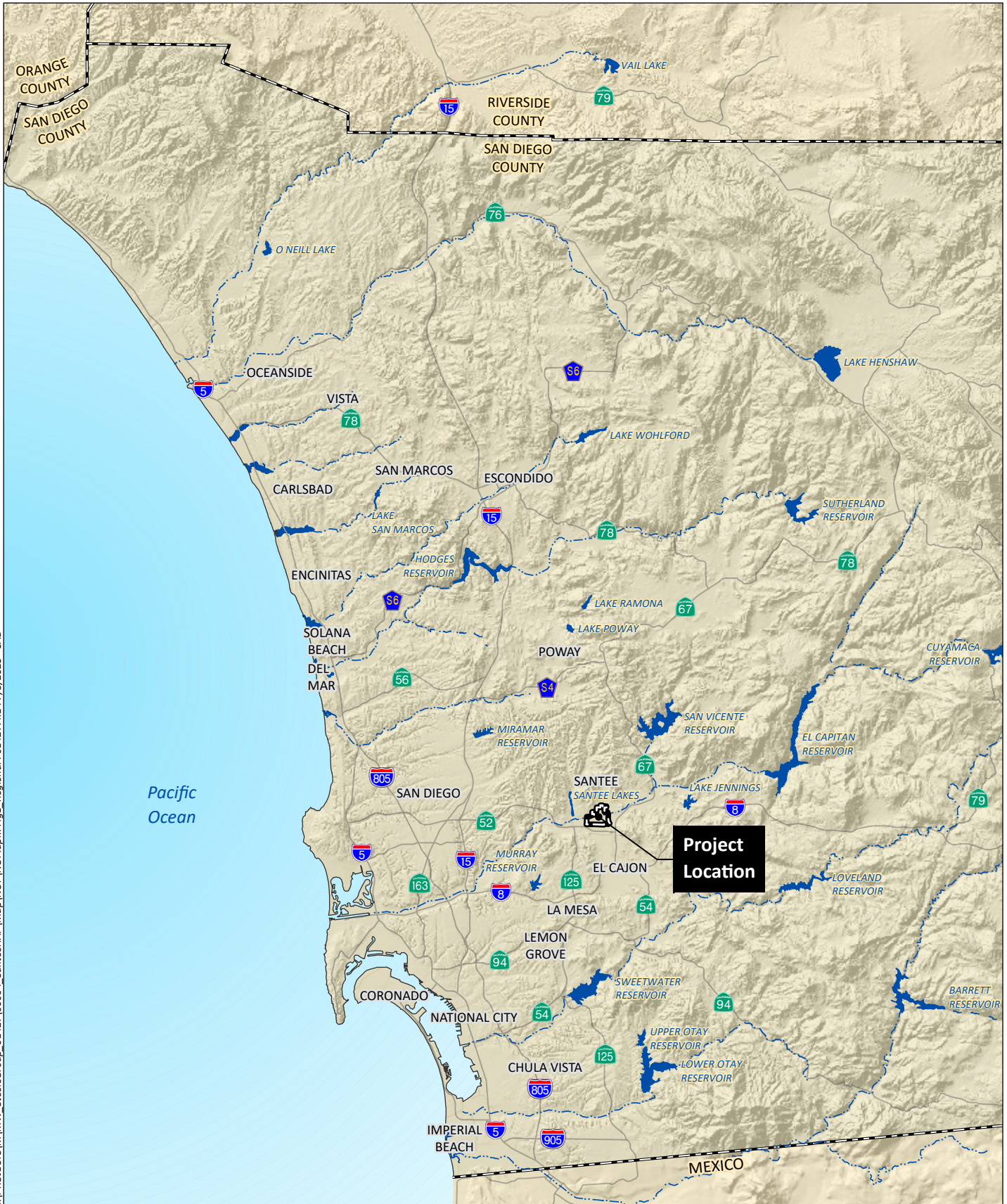
significant environmental impacts in the following topic areas, which will be further evaluated in the EIR:

- Aesthetics/Visual
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Cumulative Effects
- Growth Inducing Effects

As environmental documentation for this project is completed, it will be available for review at the City's Planning & Building Department located in Building 4 at Santee City Hall, 10601 Magnolia Avenue, Santee, CA 92071, and online at:




<https://www.cityofsanteeca.gov/services/project-environmental-review>





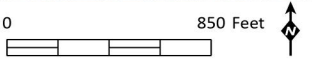
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Source: Base Map Layers (SanGIS, 2016)

-  Proposed Santee Town Center SP (651.42 ac)
-  Proposed Art & Entertainment Boundary (341.72 ac)
-  Property 16A (11.04 ac)
-  Property 16B (8.65 ac)
-  Property 20A (7.76 ac)
-  Property 20B (9.92 ac)



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Source: Aerial (SanGIS, 2023)