

# **NOC Attachment: Project Description**

## **1 Project Location**

---

### **REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The City of Diamond Bar is located at the far eastern edge of the San Gabriel Valley, within 30 miles driving distance of the cities of Los Angeles, Riverside, and Irvine. The western edge of the city lies at the intersection of State Route (SR) 57 and SR-60, with SR-57 connecting to Interstate 10 (I-10) 1.5 miles to the north, and SR-60 connecting to SR-71 1.75 miles to the east. The city is connected to regional rail service via the Industry Metrolink Station, located on Diamond Bar's northern border with the City of Industry. The regional setting is depicted in Figure 1.

### **PLANNING AREA**

The General Plan Planning Area (Planning Area), shown in Figure 2, is defined as the land area addressed by the General Plan update. The Planning Area encompasses 13,039 acres, of which 73 percent is in the city limits and the remaining 27 percent is in the Sphere of Influence (SOI). It is bounded by the City of Pomona to the northeast/north/northwest, the City of Industry to the west/northwest, unincorporated Los Angeles County (Rowland Heights) to the west, unincorporated Orange County and the City of Brea to the south, and the City of Chino Hills to the east. While Diamond Bar does not have jurisdiction in areas outside of its city limits, any land located outside of a city's jurisdictional boundaries that bears relation to its planning must be considered in the city's general plan (California Government Code Section 65300). This typically includes a city's SOI and may also include additional land.

## **2 Project Description**

---

The proposed Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will cover the Diamond Bar General Plan update and Climate Action Plan, referred to as the Proposed Project. The following section provides background information on the Proposed Project.

### **CITY OF DIAMOND BAR GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

In late 2016, the City of Diamond Bar initiated a multi-year collaborative process to comprehensively update its General Plan, which dates back to 1995 and does not necessarily reflect current conditions or community priorities. The update process will allow the community to establish priorities regarding land use, parks and recreation, public gathering spaces, mobility, and

other issues. The General Plan update will include all State-required elements other than the Housing Element, which was last updated in January 2014 (per California Department of Housing and Community Development requirements) and is not part of the Proposed Project.

Steps in the planning process have been completed include community visioning, existing conditions research, land use alternatives analysis, and preparation of a "Preferred Plan" land use map. The Public Review Draft General Plan is anticipated to be released in the winter of 2019. More information about the Diamond Bar General Plan Update, as well as documentation of the process thus far, can be found on the Diamond Bar General Plan Update website at [www.diamondbargp.com](http://www.diamondbargp.com).

### **Purpose**

The General Plan is a long-term document with text and diagrams that express the goals, objectives, and policies necessary to guide the community toward achieving its vision over a 20- to 30-year period. City decisionmakers (e.g., City Council and Planning Commission), rely on the General Plan as a basis for making decisions on matters such as land use and the provision of public facilities (e.g., roads, parks, community buildings, etc.). It is also a policy document that guides decisions related to protecting, enhancing, and providing the resources and amenities valued by the community.

### **Objectives**

An ongoing public participation process has provided opportunities for public input to the Diamond Bar General Plan Update. Early in the planning process, the community was engaged through citywide surveys, community workshops, General Plan Advisory Committee meetings and Planning Commission and City Council study sessions to establish priorities for future planning, resulting in the following vision statement and guiding principles for the General Plan Update that have been adopted by the City Council.

1. **Protect and preserve existing neighborhoods.** Community members have indicated a strong interest in protecting and preserving the character of existing neighborhoods.
2. **Expand options for local dining and retail.** Expanding options for local dining, retail and entertainment in Diamond Bar was another common theme throughout the community engagement process. This objective was often coupled with that of creating a downtown or town center in Diamond Bar, where new dining, retail and entertainment options could be concentrated.
3. **Protect and enhance environmental quality.** Open space and conservation were characteristics cited by many as defining elements of the character of Diamond Bar. Community members expressed a desire to protect and enhance environmental resources and quality.
4. **Provide more spaces for public recreation and community gathering.** Providing more spaces for public recreation and community gathering was another community priority, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of youth and seniors in Diamond Bar.

5. **Improve mobility.** Addressing traffic and congestion recurred as a priority throughout the community engagement process.

### **General Plan Update Contents**

The General Plan Update will address the following topics, meeting the requirements for general plan contents under California Government Code §65302, as well as certain optional topics the City wishes to include in the General Plan update. The Housing Element was adopted in January 2014 and is not part of this update. The following is a working list of the elements; it should be noted that the General Plan is in the process of development, and elements may be reorganized as the General Plan development evolves.

- **Land Use and Economic Development.** This element will direct the location, form, and intensity of land uses in the Planning Area. It will also include an Economic Development component that provides policy direction for fostering development and revitalization.
- **Circulation.** This element will address issues related to transportation. It will respond to the California Complete Streets Act of 2008 by planning for a balanced, multimodal transportation system that meets the needs of all users of roadways, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, seniors, persons with disabilities, public transportation users, and movers of commercial goods.
- **Resource Conservation.** This element will establish goals and policies for the conservation of natural resources in Diamond Bar. Per State requirements, this element will address open space; biological resources; hydrology and water quality; air quality, greenhouse gas emission reduction, and climate change adaptation.
- **Public Services and Facilities.** This element will provide a policy framework for the City to manage infrastructure and services. The element will address topics such as police and fire services; parks and recreational facilities and programs; schools; and water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste systems.
- **Public Safety Element.** This element will identify the natural and man-made public health and safety hazards that exist within the Planning Area and establish policies to mitigate their potential impacts. Per State requirements, the element will address seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, hazardous materials, fire hazards, emergency services, neighborhood safety, and noise.
- **Community Character and Placemaking.** This element will establish a policy framework for the urban form and character of Diamond Bar as a whole, as well as focus on the visions and opportunities for key change areas.
- **Community Health and Sustainability.** This element will focus on various aspects of public health and sustainability, which may include food access, active transportation, public health indicators, economic opportunity, and access to services.

### **Planning Horizon**

The Diamond Bar General Plan Update uses a horizon year of 2040. State law specifies that general plans take a long-term perspective; therefore, in order to effectively set goals and policies that can

guide strategic decision-making, most general plans look ahead approximately 20 years. The horizon year of 2040 does not signify an “end point.” Rather, it represents a reasonable range in which to plan comprehensively for the city’s next phase of growth, change, and investment.

### **Land Use Designations and Framework**

Land use designations establish the intended uses and density of development in certain areas throughout the Planning Area. The General Plan land use diagram shows the location of designated land uses within the Planning Area. The land use diagram for the Proposed Project is shown in Figure 3.

The proposed land use framework is based on the current General Plan classifications and diagram, with most land use classifications being carried over and the majority of the diagram remaining unchanged. Revisions to the land use diagram proposed in the General Plan Update target four change areas in the city: the commercial area at the intersection of Diamond Bar Boulevard and Golden Springs Drive, which would be redesignated to allow for a mixed-use Town Center; a portion of northern Diamond Bar Boulevard that would be redesignated as a mixed-use neighborhood; the area surrounding the Industry Metrolink Station, which would be designated for transit-oriented mixed use; and the portion of the Diamond Bar Golf Course south of Grand Avenue, which would be designated for community-serving mixed use in the event that the County chooses to cease golf course operations there. Proposed revisions to the land use diagram and designations are as follows.

- **New Land Use Designations.** The following new designations are being considered in the updated General Plan. Note that General Plan policies will further delineate permitted and desired mixes of uses.
  - **Town Center Mixed Use (TC-MU).** TC-MU allows a mix of uses to promote the creation of a vibrant mixed-use Town Center on the east and west sides of Diamond Bar Boulevard, extending from Golden Springs Drive to SR 60. This land use designation would emphasize community-serving and destination retail, dining, and entertainment uses.
  - **Neighborhood Mixed Use (N-MU).** N-MU would allow a mix of residential and neighborhood-serving retail and service uses to promote revitalization of the stretch of Diamond Bar Boulevard between the 57/60 interchange and Highland Valley Road.
  - **Transit Oriented Mixed Use (TOD-MU).** TOD-MU would allow high-density housing and supporting commercial uses for the creation of a walkable, transit-oriented mixed-use neighborhood. The proposed TOD-MU area is located south of the City of Industry Metrolink station.
  - **Community Core Overlay.** The Community Core Overlay would be applied to the portion of the Diamond Bar Golf Course south of Grand Avenue. The underlying Golf Course designation permits continued operation of the present golf course use. Were the golf course to cease operation, this overlay designation would allow and encourage a mix of uses with an emphasis on destination and specialty retail, dining, and entertainment uses.

## **CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

A CAP is a comprehensive plan for addressing a community's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A CAP, or similar strategy, can serve as a mitigation strategy under CEQA for GHG/climate change impacts associated with a proposed project. The proposed CAP will be developed concurrently with the General Plan Update, reflecting the City's proposed land use and transportation strategy and GHG implications of various proposed General Plan's goals and policies

### **Purpose**

The proposed CAP is intended to reinforce the City's commitment to reducing GHG emissions, and demonstrate how the City will comply with State of California's GHG emission reduction standards. As a Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, the CAP will also enable streamlined environmental review of future development projects, in accordance with CEQA. Specifically, the CAP will quantify existing and projected GHG emissions in the Planning Area resulting from activities within the Planning Area and the region through horizon year 2040 and will include GHG emissions reduction targets for the year 2040. The CAP will also contain any actions required to ensure that targets are met. The CAP's GHG emission targets will be based on meeting the goals set in Executive Order S-3-05 and Senate Bill 32, following the CAP guidelines established in the 2017 Scoping Plan.

### **Objectives**

Section 15183.5 of the CEQA Guidelines permits lead agencies to analyze and mitigate the significant effects of GHG emissions at a programmatic level through a plan to reduce GHG gas emissions. In doing so, the lead agency allows later project-specific environmental documents to tier from and/or incorporate by reference that existing programmatic review. The proposed CAP's objectives are to meet CEQA requirements (Section 15183.5) to allow for future tiering and streamlining of the analysis of GHG emissions, which state that a plan for the reduction of GHG emissions should:

- Quantify GHG emissions, both existing and projected over a specified time period, resulting from activities within a defined geographic area;
- Establish a level, based on substantial evidence, below which the contribution to GHG emissions from activities covered by the plan would not be cumulatively considerable;
- Identify and analyze the GHG emissions resulting from specific actions or categories of actions anticipated within the geographic area;
- Specify measures or a group of measures, including performance standards, that substantial evidence demonstrates, if implemented on a project-by-project basis, would collectively achieve the specified emissions level;
- Establish a mechanism to monitor the plan's progress toward achieving the level and to require amendment if the plan is not achieving specified levels;
- Be adopted in a public process following environmental review.

### 3 Environmental Impact Report

---

The EIR will analyze the potential environmental consequences of adopting the proposed Diamond Bar General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan (the Proposed Project). It will discuss how goals, policies, and implementing actions of the Proposed Project may affect the environment, identify significant impacts, and recommend measures to mitigate those impacts. It will also evaluate the cumulative impacts and potential growth-inducing impacts of the Proposed Project. The EIR will consider the environmental impacts of various alternatives developed during the planning process, including the “No Project Alternative” (projected outcomes based on continued implementation of the existing General Plan [1995]), and identify an environmentally superior alternative.

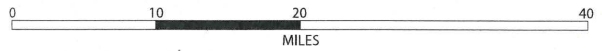
The environmental assessment will utilize the most current guidelines for CEQA and for each issue area. The EIR will be prepared to take full advantage of CEQA streamlining and tiering opportunities for future projects, whether in accordance with provisions of SB 375, or other tiering and exemption provisions in CEQA. Community members can provide input at two different phases in the EIR process: in response to this Notice of Preparation (where comments are solicited on the scope of the EIR), and to the Draft EIR itself when that document is released (when comments are solicited on the analysis and conclusions of the EIR).

The environmental factors listed below have the potential to be affected by the proposed project and will be analyzed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural, Tribal, and Historic Resources
- Energy, Climate Change, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Geology, Soils and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology, Drainage, and Water Quality
- Land Use, Population, and Housing
- Noise and Vibration
- Public Facilities and Recreation
- Traffic and Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems

CEQA allows environmental effects for which there is no likelihood of a significant impact to be “scoped out” of the EIR analysis. Based on characteristics of the planning area, the following two topic areas will be included in the Effects Found Not to Be Significant section of the EIR: agriculture and forestry, and mineral resources. No agricultural activities or activities related to mineral resources occur within the Planning Area boundaries, and none of the properties are designated for agricultural use or as relevant for farmland or mineral resources by the State of California. Full documentation of the factual basis for this determination will be included in the EIR. Unless specific comments are received during the NOP public comment period that indicate a potential for the project to result in significant impacts, these less than significant effects will be addressed briefly in the EIR and “scoped out.”

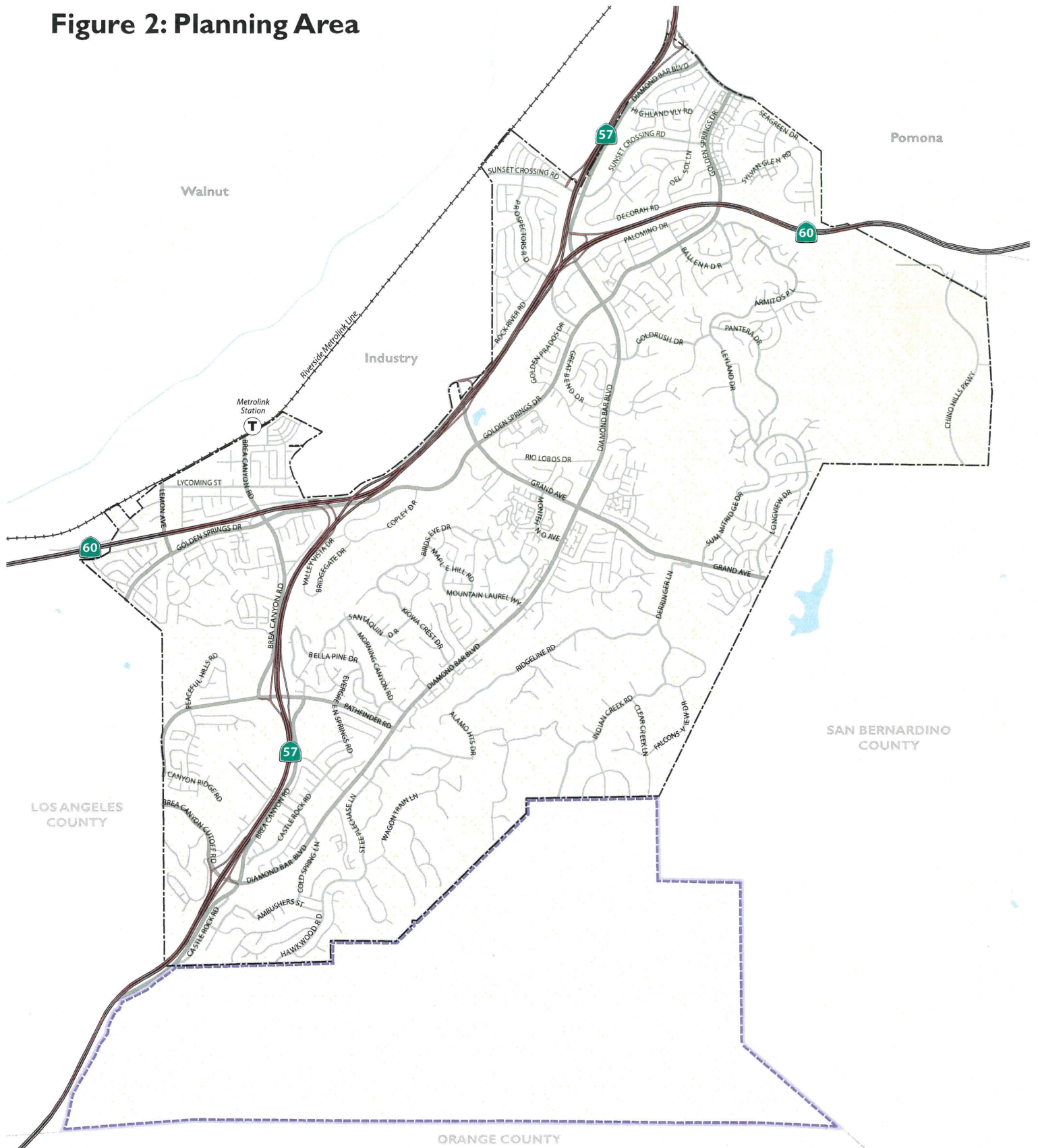
**Figure I: Regional Setting**



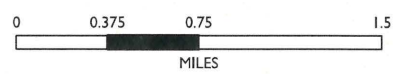
- City of Diamond Bar Planning Area
- Parks/Open Space
- Freeways
- Highways
- Rail and Light Rail



# Figure 2: Planning Area



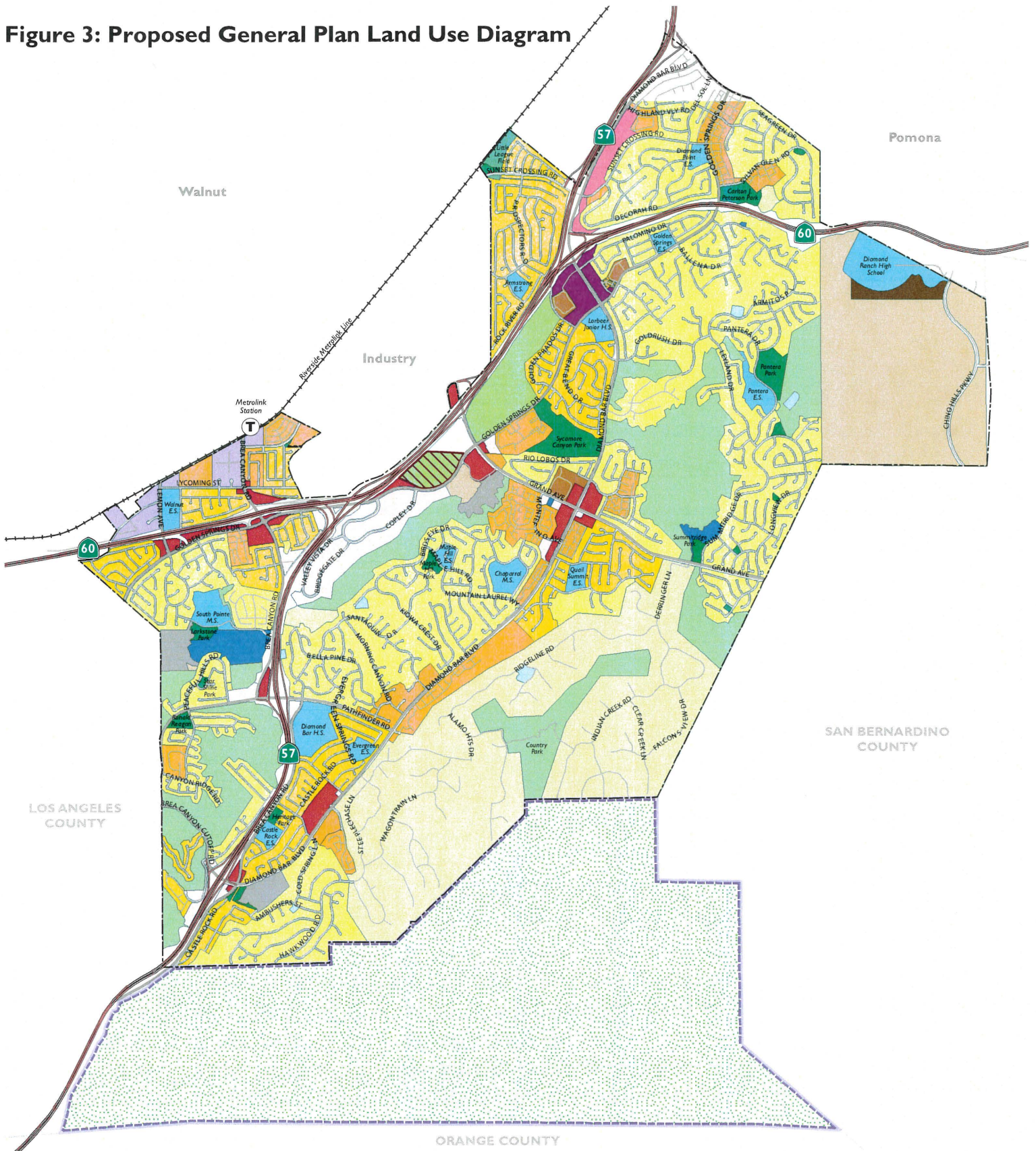
- Highways
- Local Roads
- Ramps
- Railroads
- Major Roads
- Water Features
- City of Diamond Bar
- Sphere of Influence
- County Boundary



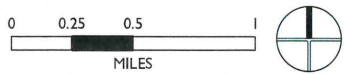
Source: City of Diamond Bar 2016; Dyett & Bhatia, 2016



**Figure 3: Proposed General Plan Land Use Diagram**



- |                                 |                             |                  |                             |                     |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Rural Residential               | High Density Residential-30 | Water            | Private Recreation          | City of Diamond Bar |
| Low Density Residential         | Neighborhood Mixed Use      | School           | Significant Ecological Area | Sphere of Influence |
| Low-Medium Residential          | Town Center Mixed Use       | Public Facility  | Planning Area               | County Boundary     |
| Medium Density Residential      | Transit Oriented Mixed Use  | Park             | Specific Plan               |                     |
| Medium High Density Residential | General Commercial          | Golf Course/Park | Right of Way                |                     |
| High Density Residential        | Office                      | Open Space       | Mixed Use Overlay           |                     |



Source: City of Diamond Bar 2016; Dyett & Bhatia, 2018