

NOTICE OF PREPARATION DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT SUNSET CROSSROADS

As Lead Agency, the City of Banning (City) is publishing this Notice of Preparation (NOP) for a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), to evaluate the environmental impacts of the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan and related entitlements described below.

As described under Project Setting below, the Project Site consists of approximately 532.7 acres of land upon which the Development Project (defined below) is proposed to be developed. The Project Site is located south of Interstate 10 (I-10) and the Sunset Avenue interchange. The northerly portion of the Project Site consists of approximately 279.8 acres (Northern Portion of the Site) and is located in the City of Banning; the southerly portion of the Project Site (Southern Portion of the Site) consists of approximately 252.9 acres within the City of Banning's Sphere of Influence (SOI) also within the unincorporated area of Riverside County (Figure 1).

The dividing line between the Northern Portion of the Site and the Southern Portion of the Site is a section line that forms the centerline of the existing right of way of Sun Lakes Boulevard from Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue. The roadway extension is a City project which has been previously considered by the City in an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted in March 2020 for GPA 19-2502 (Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project). The roadway extension project encompasses approximately 21.4 acres within a dedicated 110-foot right-of-way that bisects the Project Site from east to west and is "Not a Part" of the Project Site. In addition, the City owns four separate sites that accommodate sewer and water infrastructure. These are located south of the future extension of Sun Lakes Boulevard, totaling approximately 0.84 acre and are also "Not a Part" of the Project Site.

The following proposed actions collectively are referred to as the Project:

City of Banning

- General Plan Amendment amending the Project Site from High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Open Space-Resource and Open Space-Parks to approximately 397.1 acres of Industrial, approximately 14.6 acres of Open Space-Parks (within this designation, approximately 5.0 acres will be utilized for park uses with the remaining acreage retained as natural open space) and approximately 54.1 acres of Open Space-Resource. The existing General Commercial designation, on approximately 47.9 acres at the northeast corner of the Project Site, will remain. Including the approximately 19.0 acres devoted for internal roadways, the Project Site encompasses 532.7 acres. The Southern Portion of the Site (located in the City's SOI) is currently designated in the County of Riverside General Plan as Low Density Residential.

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- Zoning to and adoption of Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan that would create 19 planning areas (PA) and allow for General Commercial, Industrial, and Open Space Uses.
- Approval of Parcel Map and Vesting Tract Map to subdivide the Project Site.
- Adoption of a Pre-Annexation and Development Agreement.

The Project may also include creation of a Community Facilities District (CFD).

The Project will include and the EIR will analyze the reasonably foreseeable impacts associated with removal of the residential land use and zoning designations of the property within the City and the requirement to ensure no net loss of residential capacity. To achieve this intent, the EIR will consider the modification of development standards, policies, and conditions applicable to an approximately 40.9-acre site located in the City of Banning owned by the Mt. San Jacinto Community College District (MSJCD).¹ This undeveloped site is located directly south and east of the MSJCD San Gorgonio Pass campus (3144 West Westward Avenue) and immediately east of the Project Site (across Sunset Avenue.) As necessary, one or more additional properties may also be analyzed in the EIR for this purpose.

Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (Riverside County LAFCO)

- Application to the Riverside County LAFCO for Annexation of the Southern Portion of the Project Site to the City of Banning.

This NOP is being circulated to obtain the input and comments of you or your agency or organization as to the scope and content of the environmental information relative to your agency or organization's responsibilities or interests in connection with the Project. If applicable, your agency may need to use the EIR when considering issuance of a permit or other approval for the Project. Information provided to the City during the NOP comment period will be used to shape and focus the analysis of environmental impact in the EIR.

¹ APNs: 537-140-001 through 537-140-012.

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LEAD AGENCY AND LIST OF RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

A Responsible Agency is a public agency which proposes to carry out or approve a project for which a lead agency is preparing or has prepared an environmental document. A Trustee Agency is a public agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources held in trust for the people of the State, which may be affected by the Project.

Lead Agency. The City of Banning will be the Lead Agency for the Project.

Responsible Agency. The Riverside County LAFCO will be a Responsible Agency and will use the EIR for consideration of the annexation application.

Trustee Agencies. The following agencies will be Trust Agencies and will rely on the EIR for future permits and/or approvals:

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- County of Riverside
- Regional Conservation Authority (RCA)
- South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- California Air Resources Board (CARB)

NOP COMMENT PERIOD: The NOP public comment periods begins Tuesday, February 2, 2021, and ends on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines*¹ Section 15082(b), the City invites you to submit written comments describing your specific environmental concerns, and if representing a public agency, to identify your specific areas of statutory responsibility. Please send your NOP comments to:

¹ California Code of Regulations, Title 14. Natural Resources, Division 6. Resources Agency, Chapter 3. Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, as amended December 28, 2018. The CEQA Guidelines explain how to determine whether an activity is subject to environmental review, what steps are involved in the environmental review process, and the required content of environmental documents. The CEQA Guidelines apply to public agencies throughout the state, including local governments, special districts, and state agencies.

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City of Banning

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Please include the name of the agency or organization (if applicable), address, email, and contact person in your correspondence. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Rush at (951) 922-3131 or via email at arush@banningca.gov. Written comments are wanted at the earliest possible date, but due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be received by March 3, 2021.

A copy of this NOP is available for public review at the City of Banning Community Development Department, 99 E. Ramsey Street, Banning, California 92220 and the Banning Library, which is located at 21 West Nicolet Street, Banning, California 92220. To facilitate public review during current pandemic restrictions, an electronic copy of the NOP is available on the City's Website: <http://www.ci.banning.ca.us/Archive.aspx?AMID=60&Type=&ADID>.

SCOPING MEETING: The City will hold an **online** Public Scoping Meeting on February 17, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of receiving comments concerning topics to be analyzed in the EIR. The **online** Public Scoping Meeting will include a brief presentation introducing the Project and the CEQA process and an opportunity to ask questions regarding the scope of the environmental analysis. The City will post notice of the Scoping Meeting at City Hall, at the Banning Library, in the *Record Gazette*, and on the City's website.

EIR PROCESS: In accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15060, the City has determined that the Project will have a potentially significant effect on the environment and an EIR is required to assess project-related impacts. As permitted under *CEQA (Guidelines* Section 15060[d]), the City has elected to begin work directly on the EIR in lieu of further initial review. Because an Initial Study has not been prepared for the Project, the EIR will address each of the environmental issues identified in Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*:

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- Aesthetics
- 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
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utility and Service Systems
- Wildfire

The EIR will contain a detailed project description, maps identifying the Project Site location and surrounding land uses, existing environmental setting, project-specific impacts, cumulative impacts, mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels, mitigation monitoring plan, and an alternatives analysis. The EIR's environmental analysis will utilize data from site- and project-specific technical studies that will be distributed as appendices to the Draft EIR.

PROJECT SITE AND SETTING: The approximately 532.7-acre Site is located in the City of Banning and an unincorporated portion of Riverside County¹ and encompasses the APNs 537-110-003, 004, 005, 007, 008, 011, and 012; and 537-120-013, 025, and 028 through 036.

As depicted in Figure 1, the Project Site abuts the right-of-way (ROW) of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) south of I-10, and Bobcat Road provides the southern boundary of the Project Site. The Project Site is further bounded by Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue on the west and on the east, respectively. The proposed alignment of Sun Lakes Boulevard bisects the Project Site east to west, between Sunset Avenue and Highland Home Road. The 279.8-acre Northern Portion of the Site (north of the Sun Lakes Boulevard extension) is located within the City. The approximately 252.9 acres located south of the Sun Lakes Boulevard extension, comprising the Southern Portion of the Site is located within an unincorporated portion of Riverside County and is in the City's SOI. As noted above, a component of the Project is the annexation of this Southern Portion of the Site into the City.

Elevations on the Project Site range from approximately 2,395 to 2,576 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Surrounding land uses include residential subdivisions, public facilities, and open space. The Sun Lakes Country Club, a large age-restricted

¹ U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) 7.5-minute *Beaumont, California* quadrangle, within portions of Sections 7 and 18, Township 3 S, Range 1 E.

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residential community and golf course, is located along the west side of Highland Homes Road. The Rancho San Gorgonio (RSG) Specific Plan, an approved 831-acre master planned residential community is located east of Sunset Avenue, south of the eastern extension of Sun Lakes Boulevard.

The Northern Portion of the Site is located in the City of Banning and has current land use designations under the City's General Plan for a range of residential uses (LDR, MDR and HDR), general commercial uses (GC), and open space (OS-P and OS-R). As indicated above, the Southern Portion of the Site is currently unincorporated Riverside County with a General Plan land use designation under the County's General Plan of low density residential (LDR) and is zoned A-1, Light Agriculture. The Southern Portion of the Site is located within the City's SOI area and the City has provided pre-zoning of the Site in conjunction with the SOI; however, the County of Riverside has land use jurisdiction over the Southern Portion of the Site.

No structures are currently located on the Site. A number of easements for streets, utilities, gas and oil pipelines, landscaping, and communications systems transect the Project Site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Project seeks to entitle and permit development of the approximately 532.7-gross acre Site with approximately 47.9 acres of freeway-oriented General Commercial land uses, approximately 397.1 acres of Industrial land uses, with the remaining approximately 68.7 acres designated as Open Space-Resource (approximately 54.1 acres) or Open Space-Parks (approximately 14.6 acres) or assigned for circulation features (approximately 19.0 acres) (Figure 2). The proposed Specific Plan will establish Zoning regulations for each proposed use type, including, but not limited to, allowed uses, intensity of use, building heights, setbacks, lot area and dimensions, parking, landscaping, signage, as well identify on-site circulation and infrastructure improvements necessary to support the proposed project components.

Project entitlements will include Annexation of the County portion of the Project Site into the City of Banning, a General Plan Amendment, changing the zoning to Specific Plan and adoption of the Specific Plan, as well as approval of subdivision maps and a Pre-Annexation and Development Agreement. A thorough description of the various project components, extent and intensity of development, planned improvements and project features will be included in the Draft EIR.

The development proposed to be permitted by the Project entitlements is referred to as the "Development Project" and includes the following:

The General Commercial portion of the Specific Plan proposes approximately 295,000 square feet of buildings, supporting retail, hospitality, truck stop/convenience type and restaurant uses. The Industrial portion of the Specific Plan proposes approximately

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5.5 million square feet of building area, supporting a variety of warehousing and logistics opportunities (Figure 3).

The Project Site is proposed to be divided into a series of Planning Areas in the Specific Plan. A summary of the development proposed within each Planning Area is provided below.

Planning Area	Use	Development	Square Footage	Acres
1	General Commercial	Entertainment, recreation, restaurant, and retail 125-room hotel travel center fuel sales	295,000	47.9
SUBTOTAL: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT			295,000	47.9
2	Industrial/Warehouse	Building 5 Building 6	326,000 152,000	33.6
3	Industrial/Warehouse	Building 4	44,000	7.9
4	Industrial/Warehouse	Building 1 Building 2 Building 3	1,420,000 1,386,000 575,000	197.0
5	Industrial/Warehouse	Building 7	896,000	66.0
6	Industrial/Warehouse	Building 8	250,000	28.1
7	Industrial/Warehouse	Building 9	274,000	28.8 ¹
8	Parking/Storage	Trailer storage		16.0
9	Parking/Storage	RV storage		3.3
10	Industrial/Warehouse	Building 10	222,000	16.4
SUBTOTAL: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT			5.5 million industrial/logistic	397.1
11	Open Space-Parks	Natural Open Space and Park		14.6 ²
12	Open Space-Resource	Natural Open Space		13.4
13	Open Space-Resource	Drainage ³		7.6
14	Open Space-Resource	Drainage		7.2
15	Open Space-Resource	Drainage		6.0
16	Open Space-Resource	Drainage		4.8
17	Open Space-Resource	Drainage		4.2
18	Open Space-Resource	Drainage		3.3
19	Open Space-Resource	Drainage		7.6
SUBTOTAL: OPEN SPACE				68.7
Street Dedication/Circulation				19.0
TOTAL				532.7⁴

1. The western portion of Planning Area 7 will be retained as open space, buffering uses west of the Project Site.
2. Planning Area 11 includes approximately 5.0 acres of park uses. The balance of the Planning Area will be retained as natural open space, buffering uses west of the Project Site.
3. Planning Areas 13-19 accommodate naturally occurring arroyos within the Project Site.
4. Well sites (total 0.84 acre) and the alignment of Sunset Lakes Boulevard (21.4 acres) are "Not a Part" of the Project and are not included in total Project Site acreage.

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Commercial: The General Commercial portion of the Specific Plan proposes the development of a variety of entertainment and recreational uses, outlets, retail, hospitality, travel center, fuel sales, with an accompanying convenience store and various restaurant uses. Development within the approximately 47.9 acres of Planning Area 1 will be provided in larger retail buildings providing divisible space for a variety of sports, recreation, and leisure activities. Additional standalone restaurant and retail buildings will focus inward on a central open space available for visiting patrons. Recreational uses provided in the commercial area are anticipated to include activities such as: indoor go-karting, sports training, rock-climbing, fitness centers, gymnastic training, indoor skydiving, indoor obstacle course, are related uses. Covered areas and patios throughout the Planning Area will provide connectivity to the central open space and the sports and recreation themed opportunities provided. A four-story 125-room hotel, drive-through restaurants, and travel center will provide additional amenities to travelers on I-10 and local residents alike. Total development within the Project Site's commercial area will total approximately 295,000 square feet.

Industrial: The approximately 397.1 acres of Industrial land uses will accommodate buildings in a range of sizes to accommodate a variety of industrial, logistic, and warehouse uses. Proposed buildings range in size from 44,000 to 1.42 million square feet and will provide opportunities for fulfillment centers, light industrial, short-term/transfer warehouse, parcel hub warehouse, and/or cold-storage warehouse uses. Planning Areas 8 and 9 will also provide for trailer and RV parking, respectively. Storm water management basins have been appropriately sited within industrial and parking areas to accommodate necessary drainage and water quality requirements. Open space areas designated in Planning Areas 11 and 12 and the western portion of Planning Area 7 will be provided as a buffer between industrial/logistic uses and the Sun Lakes residential community to the west.

Roadways: The Project Site is bisected by the alignment of the future Sun Lakes Boulevard extension, a City project that will provide a connection between Sunset Avenue and S. Highland Home Road within a 110-foot ROW (Figures 2 and 3). The extension of Sun Lakes Boulevard is being designed and environmentally processed by the City through an approval process separate from the Project. While the impacts and mitigation requirements associated with the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project will not be assigned to the Project, for purposes of the Project's environmental analysis, potential impacts resulting from the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project will be assessed as a cumulative condition of the Project.

Proposed dedications for circulation features will comprise approximately 19.0 acres. The area encompassing the Sun Lakes Boulevard extension (21.4 acres) is "Not a Part" of the Project. Truck access will be exclusively from the east via Sunset Avenue, Sun Lakes Boulevard, and Lincoln Street. Truck access to/from the Project will be prohibited west of S. Highland Home Road on Sun Lakes Boulevard. Public roadways to be directly improved by the Project include:

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- **Lincoln Street:** The Project will extend Lincoln Street, a proposed public Collector Street within a 66-foot ROW, from Sunset Avenue along the southern boundary of the proposed commercial area (Planning Area 1) to Planning Area 7 at the northwest portion of the Project Site. This road will provide access to industrial/logistic uses in Planning Areas 2, 5, 6, and 7 as well as trailer parking in Planning Area 8.
- **Sunset Avenue:** Designated an Arterial Highway within a 110-foot ROW from I-10 to Lincoln Street, Sunset Avenue will be improved (half-width) to Lincoln Street. From Lincoln Street south to Bobcat Road, Sunset Avenue will be improved (half-width) as a Secondary Highway within an 88-foot ROW.
- **Bobcat Road:** Bobcat Road will be improved (half width) as a Secondary Highway within an 88-foot ROW from Sunset Avenue to the western Project boundary.
- **S. Highland Home Road:** From Sun Lakes Boulevard north to Planning Area 7, S. Highland Home Road will be improved to provide a 24-foot fire access road.

Access to individual buildings within the Project Site will be provided by roads/drive aisles that will provide connectivity and secondary access to and between buildings. Regional access to the Project Site will be provided from I-10 at Sunset Avenue. Truck access to/from the Project will be prohibited west of S. Highland Home Road on Sun Lakes Boulevard.

Open Space: The Project will provide approximately 68.7 acres of open space. Planning Areas 13–19 denote existing on-site drainages areas, which will be retained in their existing condition. No permanent disturbance (grading or development) will occur within these areas. Temporary impacts may result from the installation of box culverts to facilitate roadway crossings. Open space areas designated in Planning Areas 11 and 12 and the western portion of Planning Area 7 will be provided as a buffer between industrial/logistic uses and the Sun Lakes residential community to the west. PA 11 will consist of an approximately 5-acre passive park, consisting of a tot lot, and trails. The remaining portion of PA 11, the western portion of PA 7, and all of PA 12 will be retained as natural open space.

Phasing: The Development Project is proposed to be developed in at least four phases, with buildout expected in 2027.

Grading: The Project grading is expected to balance north and south of Sun Lakes Boulevard. As necessary, minor borrow or export between Planning Areas may be needed to account for shrinking and subsidence during grading operations. The first phase of the Project will include mass grading of Planning Area 4. As grading operations progress, the presence of unsuitable material on site (e.g., trash, asphalt pavement, and debris) or unforeseen situations may require the limited haul-off of material or import of select fill, respectively.

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As Phases are developed, precise grading will be conducted to accommodate planned buildings, internal roadways and ancillary features. Disturbance within drainage areas will be limited to extent required to install crossing features.

Housing: As the demand for housing continues to outweigh supply, the EIR will address the various impacts and benefits associated with the removal of the Project Site's existing residential designation in the City. More specifically, the Project will create potential conflicts with recently signed State legislation designed to preserve zoning and housing within the City. The EIR will identify these potential conflicts in greater detail. The EIR will analyze the modification to residential uses of the existing development standards, policies, and conditions applicable to the MSJCD site (Figure 4) (which has a current general plan/zoning designation of Public Facilities-Schools) to achieve no net loss of residential capacity, and may further analyze other potential sites in the City to which existing allowed residential land use and zoning capacity can be relocated to replace this aforementioned loss of residential entitlement.

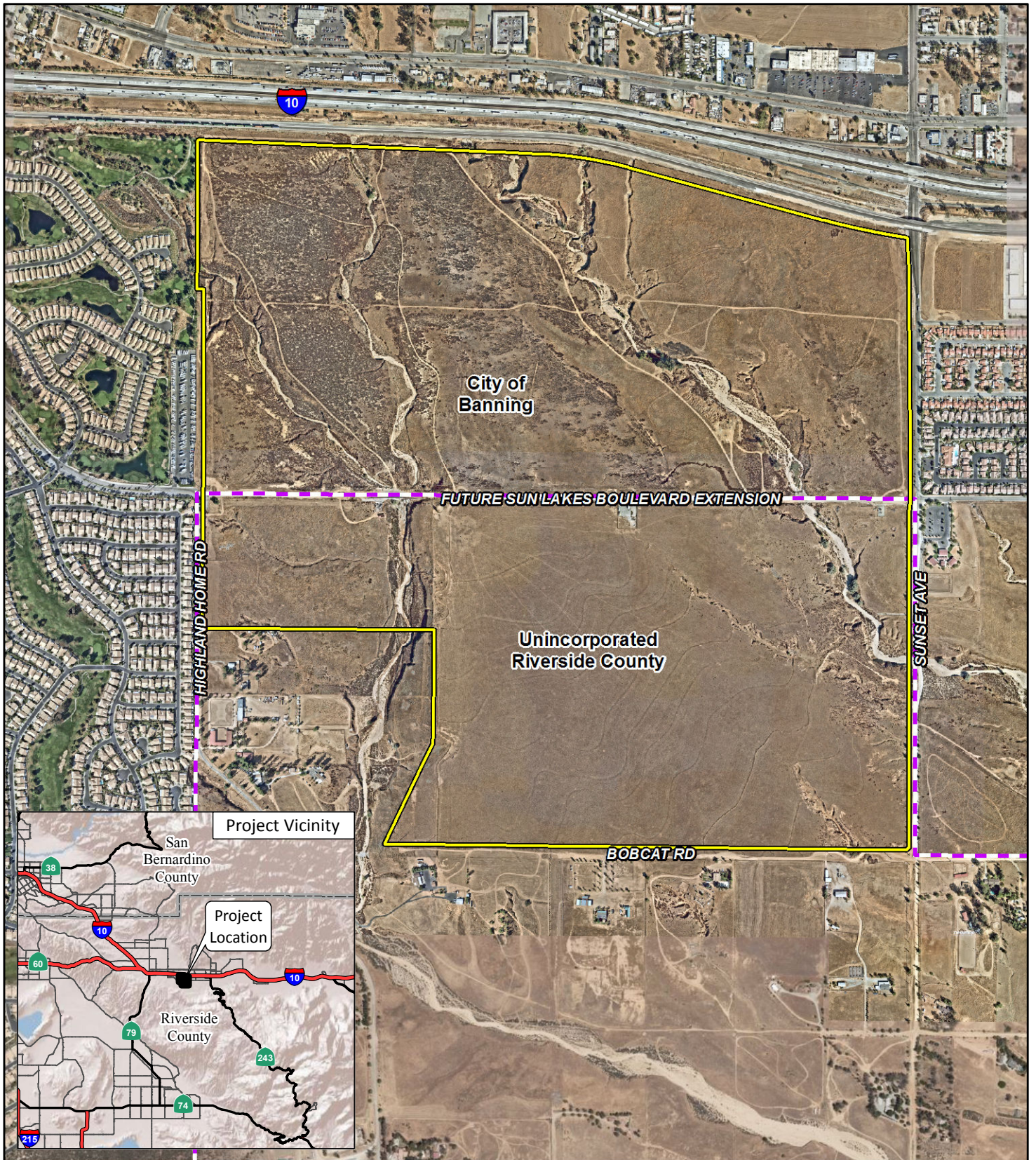




FIGURE 1

LSA

LEGEND

-  Project Location
-  City Boundary



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FEET

SOURCE: Nearmap Imagery (10/12/2020)

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FIGURE 2

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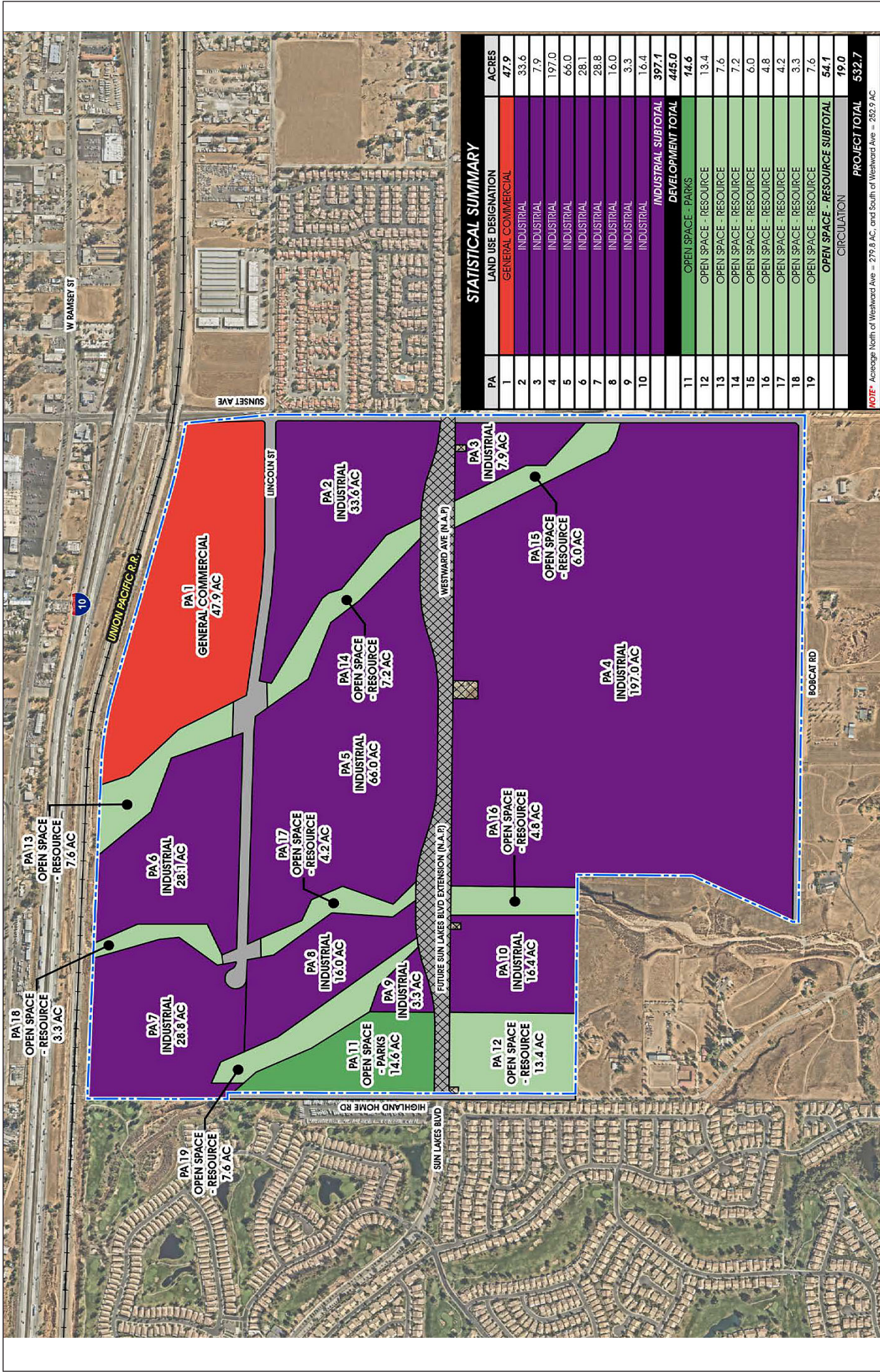
Sunset Crossroads Project NOP
Conceptual Site Plan

SOURCE: Northpoint Development, 11/10/2020

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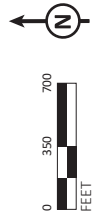


FIGURE 3

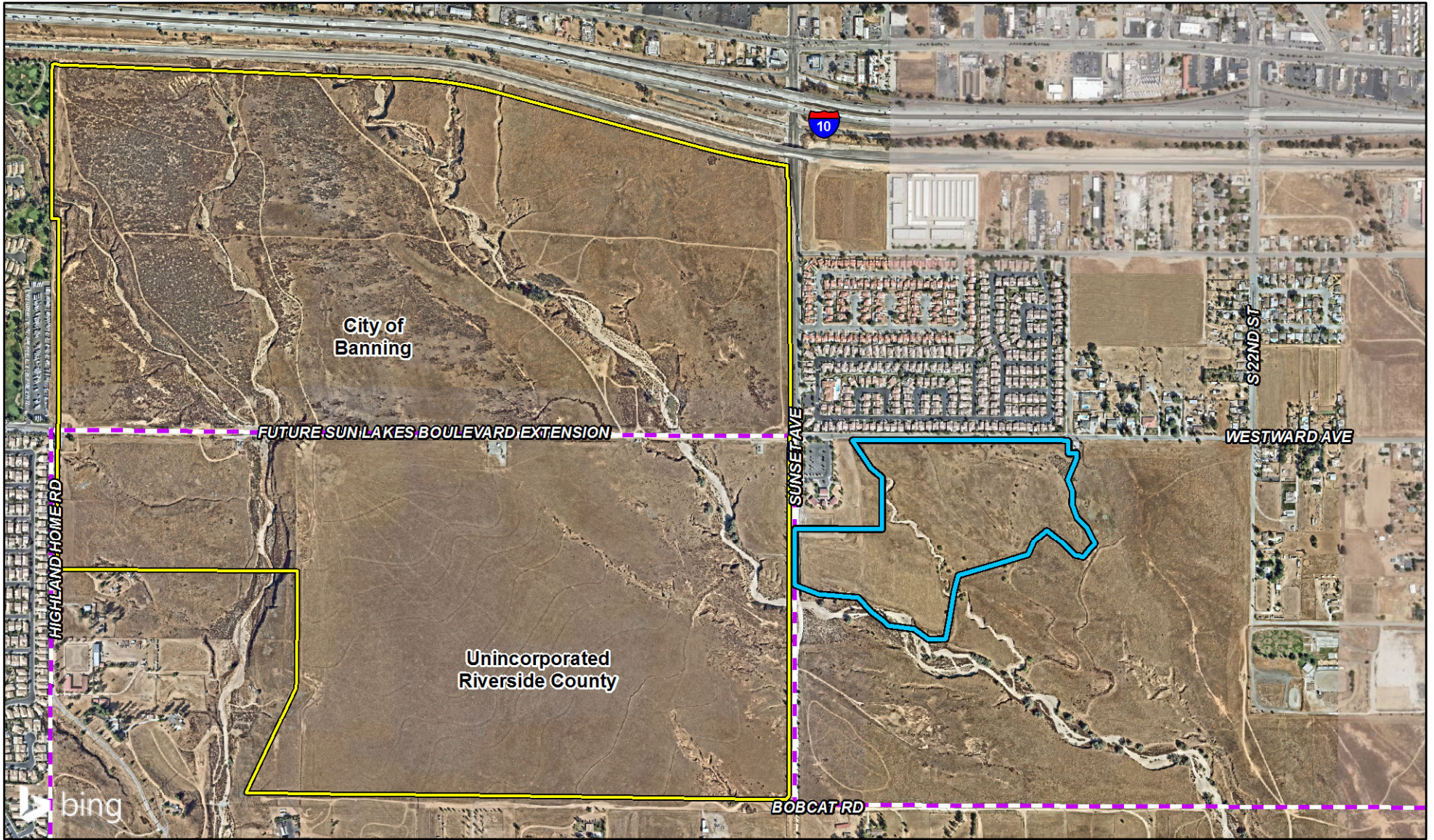
Sunset Crossroads Project NOP
Conceptual Land Use Plan

SOURCE: T&B Planning, Inc. 1/29/2021

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LSA

LEGEND

- Residential Transfer Site
- Project Location
- City Boundary



SOURCE: Nearmap Imagery (10/12/2020)

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FIGURE 4

Sunset Crossroads Project NOP
Residential Transfer Site

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