



# County of San Diego

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**KATHLEEN FLANNERY**  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION DOCUMENTATION

**DATE:** February 13, 2020

**PROJECT NAME:** Valley Center Community Plan Update

**PROJECT NUMBER(S):** PDS2018-GPA-18-009

**PROJECT APPLICANT:** County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services

**ENV. REVIEW NUMBER:** PDS2019-ER-19-00-003

### Summary

The County of San Diego (County) is proposing a comprehensive update to the Valley Center Community Plan (VCCP), including but not limited to updated goals and policies, updated Design Guidelines, an Implementation Plan, and certain focused updates to the VCCP Mobility Element Network and General Plan land use designations and zoning. All of these actions comprise the proposed project that will be analyzed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). To comply with CEQA, a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be prepared in order to analyze and disclose the environmental impacts of the project. The SEIR will tier from the General Plan Update (GPU) Program EIR (PEIR) and include updated existing conditions for the Valley Center Community Plan Area (CPA) for issues including but not limited to visual resources, air quality, biological resources, hydrologic conditions, population and housing, recreational facilities, and public services. The SEIR will also be programmatic in nature in that it will analyze the reasonably foreseeable impacts of the changes to the Community Plan. For example, changes to land use densities could result in an increase or decrease in impacts that were previously analyzed in the GPU PEIR. It should be noted that the project itself does not propose any specific development project that would result in physical impacts on the environment. However, subsequent individual projects that are implemented under the Valley Center Community Plan Update (CPU) could result in physical impacts on the environment and would be initially evaluated pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 that allows a streamlined environmental review process for projects that are consistent with the densities established by existing zoning, community plan or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to provide interested stakeholders with sufficient information describing the project and the potential environmental effects in order to make informed comments as to which environmental issue areas are of most concern and what alternatives to the project should be analyzed within the SEIR.

**Notice of Preparation Public Comment Period:**

Comments on the NOP will be accepted for 30 days following issuance of this notice and must be received no later than March 13, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. Comments on the NOP document can be emailed or sent via mail to Robert Hingtgen, Environmental Coordinator.

E-mail: Robert.Hingtgen@sdcounty.ca.gov

Address: County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services  
Attn: Robert Hingtgen  
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310  
San Diego, CA 92123-1239

**Public Scoping Meeting**

Consistent with Section 21083.9 of the CEQA Statute, a public scoping meeting will be held to solicit comments regarding the scope and analysis of the SEIR (supplement to the 2011 GPU PEIR). This meeting will be held at the Maxine Theater on Saturday, February 22, 2020, at 9:00 A.M. to 9:45 A.M. The theater is located at 31322 Cole Grade Rd. in Valley Center. The public scoping meeting will be followed by a Visioning/Existing Conditions workshop for the CPU from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

**Purpose of NOP and Scoping Meeting**

The purpose of this NOP and scoping meeting is to provide responsible agencies and the public with information about the CEQA process and the proposed project to enable all interested stakeholders to provide meaningful comments to identify environmental issues and alternatives for consideration in the SEIR. Public comments received during the NOP scoping process will be included as part of the SEIR.

**Project Background**

Sections 15162 through 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines set forth the criteria for determining the appropriate additional environmental documentation, if any, to be completed when there is a previously certified EIR covering the project for which a subsequent discretionary action is required. The program-level analysis performed for the GPU PEIR covered the CPA (and all of the unincorporated County). The SEIR for the proposed project will tier from the program-level analysis of the GPU PEIR and provide more detailed supplemental analysis of potential impacts that may result from updating the community plan.

**General Plan Update**

The GPU PEIR, Environmental Review Number 02-ZA-001, State Clearinghouse Number 2002111067, was certified by the Board of Supervisors on August 3, 2011. The certified PEIR

evaluated potentially significant effects associated with the following environmental areas of potential concern: (1) aesthetics, (2) agricultural resources, (3) air quality, (4) biological resources, (5) cultural and paleontological resources, (6) geology and soils, (7) hazards and hazardous materials, (8) hydrology and water quality, (9) land use and planning, (10) mineral resources, (11) noise, (12) population and housing, (13) public services, (14) recreation, (15) transportation and traffic, (16) utilities and service systems, and (17) climate change.

Of these 17 environmental subject areas, the GPU PEIR determined that only geology and soils and population and housing would have less than significant impacts. The GPU PEIR found potentially significant impacts would be mitigated to less than significant for the following four subject areas: cultural and paleontological resources, land use and planning, recreation, and climate change. The remaining 11 environmental issue areas were determined to have impacts that would be significant and unavoidable. The final certified GPU PEIR is available online at the County's website at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/pds/gpupdate/environmental.html>. Since the GPU PEIR was certified, additional resource areas and issues are now required by CEQA to be analyzed including tribal cultural resources, vehicle miles traveled, additional wildfire topics, and energy (with respect to energy efficiency and whether a project may result in wasteful or inefficient use or consumption of energy resources). These additional issues will be addressed in the SEIR.

## **Community Plans**

All community plans are integral components of the County General Plan and have the same weight of law and authority in guiding the physical development of the community. Community plans contain information and policies concerning land use, housing, circulation, conservation/open space, public facilities and services, recreation, and community character specific to the CPA. However, other issues can be addressed, depending on community circumstances. The policies and programs contained in a community plan, which must be consistent with the County General Plan, are intended to provide long-term guidance and stability with respect to implementing County General Plan policies and programs. The VCCP was adopted on December 31, 1979; it was last amended on November 18, 2015. The proposed project is a comprehensive update to the VCCP, which is a component of the County General Plan. Thus, the proposed action requires a General Plan Amendment (GPA).

## **Project Description**

The proposed project includes a comprehensive update to the VCCP and the Valley Center Design Guidelines. The CPU comprises an update and refinement of the current plan's goals and policies to reflect the character of Valley Center and guide growth and development. The update to the Design Guidelines for Valley Center will update site design requirements for properties subject to design review. An infrastructure study and market feasibility analysis will be completed as part of the project in order to inform proposed amendments to the VCCP, as well as identify an implementation plan that will organize and prioritize efforts, strategies, and actions designed to implement the Community Plan's vision.

Based on a planning and constraints analysis, community input, and additional considerations, the CPU may set forth changes in land use designations, zoning designations, and mobility element alignments. The project will refine the land use patterns established by the GPU and apply those land use patterns to the CPA. At this time, the County anticipates that changes to land use

designations (including allowable density and intensity) and associated zoning classifications will cover a maximum area of 1,500 acres within five specific subareas of the CPA. The locations of subareas and land use alternatives for subareas will be determined after the initial phases of the public outreach process for the project. The CPU project itself would not involve permitting for any specific development project that would involve physical impacts to the environment. However, it is reasonably foreseeable that future individual projects that are implemented consistent with the CPU could result in physical impacts on the environment.

The CPU will require a SEIR that will tier from the GPU PEIR. This SEIR will use information from the PEIR as well as provide more current and specific analyses for the CPA. The components of the CPU that will guide future development are still being developed; however, the CPU will be guided by and must remain consistent with the goals, policies, and planning concepts identified in the GPU and other relevant County plans and programs.

### **CEQA Requirements**

CEQA requires that public agencies consider the potentially significant adverse environmental effects of projects over which they have discretionary approval authority before acting on those projects (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. seq.). According to California Code of Regulations Section 15064(f)(1), preparation of an EIR is required whenever a project may result in a significant adverse environmental effect. An EIR is an informational document that is used to inform public agency decisionmakers and the general public about the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects, and describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project while substantially lessening or avoiding any of the significant environmental impacts. Public agencies are required to consider the information presented in the EIR when determining whether to approve a project.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15163 states that a lead agency may choose to prepare a supplement to the EIR rather than a subsequent EIR if the changes proposed meet the conditions described in Section 15162 and only minor additions and changes are necessary to make the previous EIR adequate. The VCCP would be updated to incorporate goals and policies from the GPU and reflect the character of Valley Center. It would refine the current plan's goals and policies, update the Design Guidelines, provide focused updates to the VCCP Mobility Element Network and revise land use designations and zoning in certain areas to guide growth and development within the CPA. As such, the County is proceeding with preparation of a SEIR to the GPU PEIR.

### **Project Location**

Valley Center is an unincorporated community of the county of San Diego (Figure 1). The CPA is comprised of approximately 94 square miles in the unincorporated area of northern San Diego County. The CPA is bordered by the North County Metro Subregional Plan area including the Hidden Meadows community, and the city of Escondido on the south, the Interstate 15 (I-15) freeway and the Bonsall Community Plan Area on the west, and the Pala/Pauma Subregional Plan Area on the north and east.

Primary access into the CPA is provided by Valley Center Road (S6), which also serves as the main linkage between the city of Escondido and Valley Center. I-15 borders the western portion of the CPA; however, the freeway does not lie within its boundaries (Figure 2).

**Probable Environmental Effects**

As described in the attached Initial Study – Environmental Checklist Form, the following is a list of the subject areas to be analyzed in the CPU SEIR. This includes the issues of energy and tribal cultural resources that were not previously required to be analyzed in the GPU PEIR. As described in the attached Initial Study – Environmental Checklist Form, only the issue of geology and soils was found to not require additional analysis beyond the GPU PEIR.

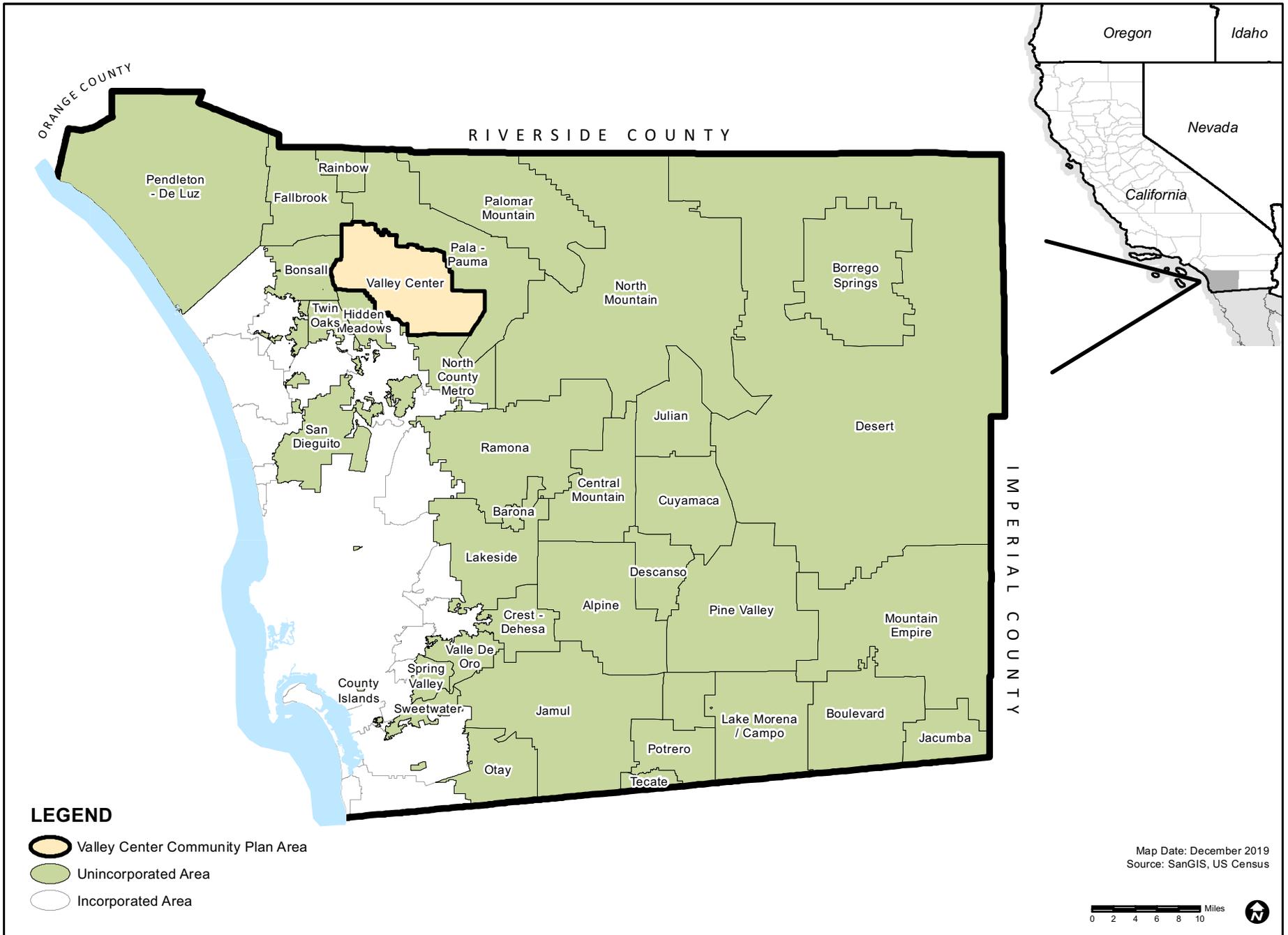
Aesthetics	Mineral Resources
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Noise
Air Quality	Population and Housing
Biological Resources	Public Services
Cultural Resources	Recreation
Energy	Transportation
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Tribal Cultural Resources
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Utilities and Service Systems
Hydrology and Water Quality	Wildfire
Land Use and Planning	

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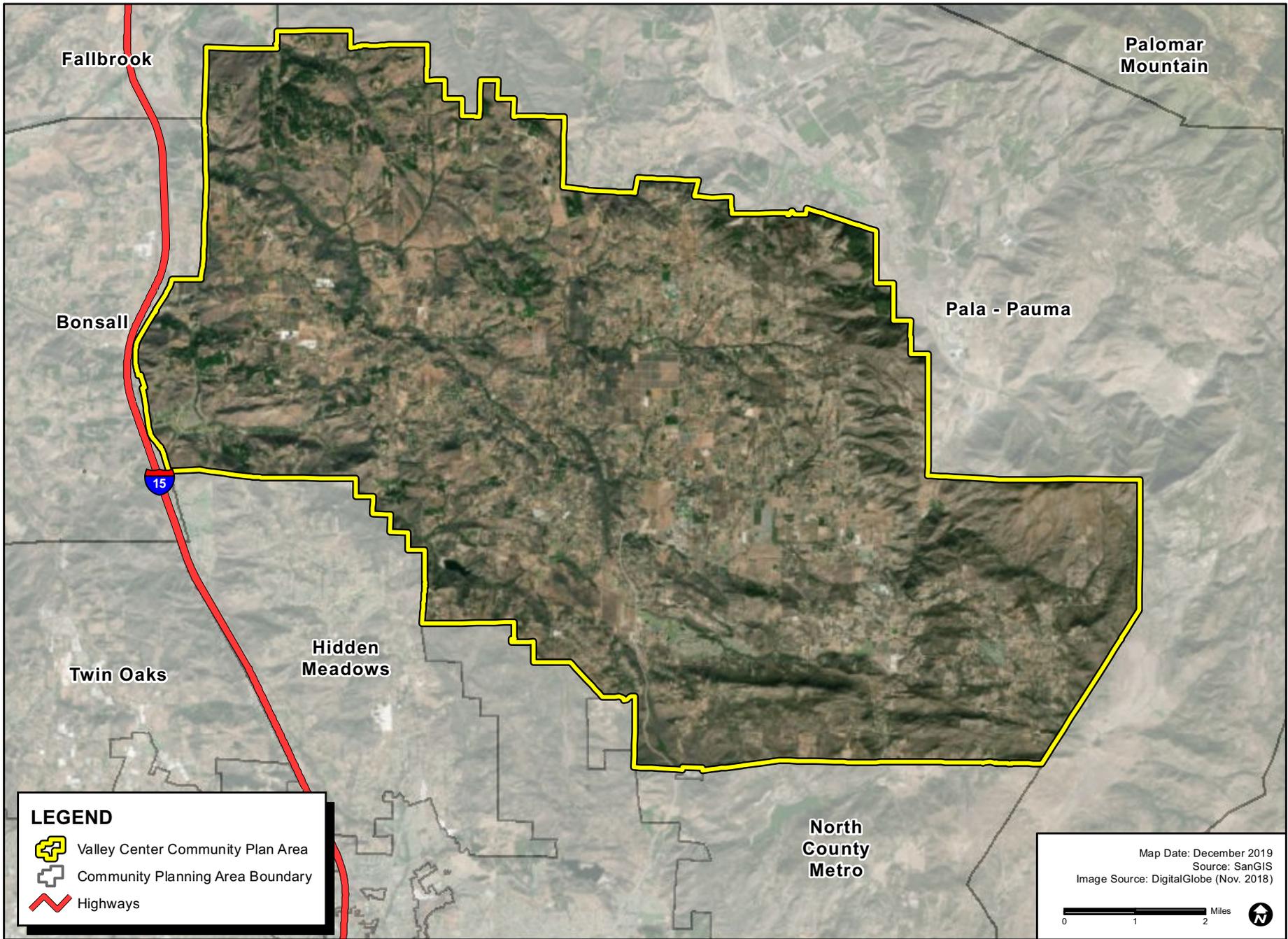
Address: County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services  
Attn: Robert Hingtgen  
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- Attachments:
- Figure 1 – Regional Location Map
  - Figure 2 – Valley Center Aerial Map
  - Initial Study – Environmental Checklist Form



**REGIONAL LOCATION MAP**

**FIGURE 1**



**VALLEY CENTER AERIAL MAP**

**FIGURE 2**