



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING FOR THE CITY-WIDE
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND HOUSING ELEMENT (2021-2029) UPDATE**

TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties DATE: April 30, 2021

The City of Whittier is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a project involving updates to the City of Whittier General Plan, including the Housing Element ("Project"). The proposed General Plan Update (GPU) incorporates statutory requirements for general plans and guidance provided in the 2017 General Plan Guidelines; incorporates state law requirements legislated since 2017; coordinates future development and policies with regional planning efforts and serves as the city's fundamental guide in developing strategies to address greenhouse gas reduction, climate change, and climate planning. The Housing Element Update establishes programs, policies and actions to further the goal of meeting the existing and projected housing needs of all income levels of the community, provides evidence of the City's ability to accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation through the year 2029, as established by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and identifies a rezoning program needed to reach the required housing capacity. More details on the Project are provided below.

The City is requesting identification of environmental issues, environmental impacts, and information that you or your organization believes needs to be considered and analyzed in the EIR, including environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives.

NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3 ("CEQA Guidelines") Section 15082(c)(1), the Lead Agency will conduct a public scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting written comments from interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, transportation agencies, and involved federal agencies, as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR.

The Public Scoping Meetings will be held in an online format using Zoom, to share information regarding the Project and the environmental review process, and provide information on how

interested parties can provide written comments. City staff and environmental consultants will be available during this meeting. The City encourages all interested individuals and organizations to attend this meeting. Interested parties wishing to provide comments or public testimony should provide them in writing, as described under "Submittal of Written Comments," below. No decisions about the Project will be made at the Public Scoping Meeting. A separate public hearing for the update to the City of Whittier General Plan Update will be scheduled after the completion of the EIR. The date, time, and virtual location of the Public Scoping Meeting is as follows:

Consistent with mandates of Executive Order No. N-29-20 (COVID-19), a physical location from which members of the public may observe the meeting or offer public comment will not be made available. For the time being, City Hall will not be open to the public for public meetings; however, viewing and public comment options are provided below.

Date: May 17, 2021 Time: 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Place: Virtual Meeting Visit Zoom Webinar

Webinar ID: 923 8665 5514

Join via Smart Phone App or Computer: <https://zoom.us/j/92386655514>

*Live comments: Use 'Raise Hand' feature when public comments begin.

Phone Call-in audio only: (669) 900-9128 and Webinar ID: 923 8665 5514

*Live comments: press *9 to 'Raise Hand' and then *6 to unmute yourself when prompted.

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The City requests your agency's views on the scope and content of the environmental information relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082(b). Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by the City when considering any permits or other project approvals that your agency must issue. As such, your responses to this Notice of Preparation (NOP), at a minimum should identify: (1) the significant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that your agency will need to have explored in the EIR; and (2) whether your agency will be a responsible or trustee agency for this Project.

REVIEW AND RESPONSE PERIOD

April 30, 2021 to June 1, 2021

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), responses to this NOP must be provided during this response period.

SUBMITTAL OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

Please send your written comments via U.S. mail to:

Sonya Lui, Principal Planner
City of Whittier
Community Development Department, Planning Services Division
13230 Penn Street, Whittier, CA 90602

You may also email your written comments to:

slui@cityofwhittier.org

If you have any questions regarding the submittal of written comments, please call Sonya Lui at (562) 567-9320.

Project Location:

The Planning Area is in southeast Los Angeles County approximately 12 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. The City is bordered by the unincorporated community of Hacienda Heights and the cities of La Habra Heights and Industry to the north/northeast. The City of Pico Rivera lies to the west, La Habra to the southeast and the Cities of Santa Fe Springs, La Mirada, Norwalk, and Orange County to the south. The regional context of Whittier is shown in Exhibit 1 (Regional Context Map) and Exhibit 2 (Planning Area) provides a more detailed view of the Planning Area, including City boundaries and Sphere of Influence areas.

The Planning Area comprises a total of 21.8 square miles. The City of Whittier encompasses 14.6 square mile most of which is developed with urban land uses. The remaining 7.2 square miles are with the City's unincorporated Sphere of Influence and use City services and community facilities. Several freeways and highways provide regional access to the Planning Area Interstate 605 (I-605) runs along the western boundary, State Route 60 (SR 60) is five miles to the north, and Interstate 5 (I-5) is approximately six miles to the south. Whittier Boulevard is a major commercial corridor that bisects Whittier from the northwest to the southeast and provides an alternative to freeway access to downtown Los Angeles and the City of La Habra. Colima Road runs north-south across the eastern part of Whittier, providing access to the San Gabriel Valley communities to the north.

Project Description:

The comprehensive update of the Whittier General Plan and Housing Element serves as the guide for the City's future growth and development. The General Plan and Housing Element contain goals, policies, and programs that will provide City staff and discretionary bodies with a foundation for decisions for long-range planning related to physical development and public services. The City of Whittier General Plan Update succeeds the last comprehensive general plan adopted in 1994. The City of Whittier Housing Element Update succeeds the last housing element adopted in 2014. The GPU incorporates statutory requirements for general plans and guidance provided in the 2017 General Plan Guidelines; coordinates future development and policies with regional planning efforts and serves as the city's fundamental guide in developing strategies to address greenhouse gas reduction, climate change, and climate planning. The GPU and HE incorporate state law requirements legislated since 2017 as well.

The 2040 planning horizon for the Planning Area is estimated to result in increases of approximately 472 single family dwellings, 7,023 multifamily dwellings, 828,448 square feet of office space, 193,819 square feet of industrial space, and a reduction of 300,102 square feet of commercial space. An estimated increase of approximately 20,190 residents and 1,396 jobs is projected for the 2040 horizon year.

The EIR incorporates each of the elements goals, policies, and objectives of the following chapters in the adopted General Plan:

- Land Use and Community Character Element
- Mobility and Infrastructure Element
- Housing Element (2021-2029)

- Resources Element
- Public Safety, Noise, and Health Element
- Historic Resources Element

These goals, objectives, and policies are intended to maintain various potential environmental effects of the project at levels that are less than significant and are considered when evaluating the potential environmental impacts of implementing the General Plan. The Housing Element is updated for the 6th cycle and planned developments identified in the Land Use Element accommodates the Regional Housing Needs Allocation goal of 3,439 housing units, which represents a 11.5% increase from the existing number of housing units within City boundaries.

Project Objectives:

The General Plan Update (GPU) and Housing Element (HE) establish the objectives listed below for the long-term growth and enhancement of the community.

1. Promote healthy and safe neighborhoods with comprehensive approaches that consider best practices around land use, mobility, housing, environmental justice, community services, and design.
2. Create new housing opportunities for a full range of housing types and to increase housing affordability.
3. Strengthen the City's industrial and office sectors.
4. Support a diversified economy with a balance of small and large businesses across a broad range of industries that provide employment, commercial, and experiential opportunities.
5. Strive for a downtown that showcases the City's rich history, celebrates local entrepreneurship, features our civic institutions, and encourages downtown living within a vibrant gathering place for the community.
6. Create an interconnected, active transportation system that recognizes and responds to the critical needs of businesses to move commerce while accommodating the equally important necessity for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists to move around the City with convenience and ease.
7. Engage residents and stakeholders in ensuring equitable and inclusive processes, policies, investments, and service systems. Ensure residents in disadvantaged communities have access to healthy foods, parks, mobility options activity, public programs, and safe homes.
8. Protect people, infrastructure, and community assets from evolving climate threats and vulnerabilities, and from natural and human-caused hazards.

Programmatic EIR:

The City of Whittier has determined that the proposed GPU and HE will require preparation of an EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is the Lead Agency for preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the proposed GPU and HE. The Program EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the General Plan Update and Housing Element Update and will recommend mitigation measures to avoid or reduce significant impacts, where applicable. The Program EIR also is intended to help the City review future project proposals pursuant to section 15168 (Program EIR) of the CEQA Guidelines. The following environmental topics will be evaluated in the EIR:

- **Aesthetics**
- **Agriculture and Forestry**
- **Air Quality**
- **Biological Resources**
- **Cultural Resources**
- **Energy**
- **Geology and Soils**
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change**
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**
- **Hydrology and Water Quality**

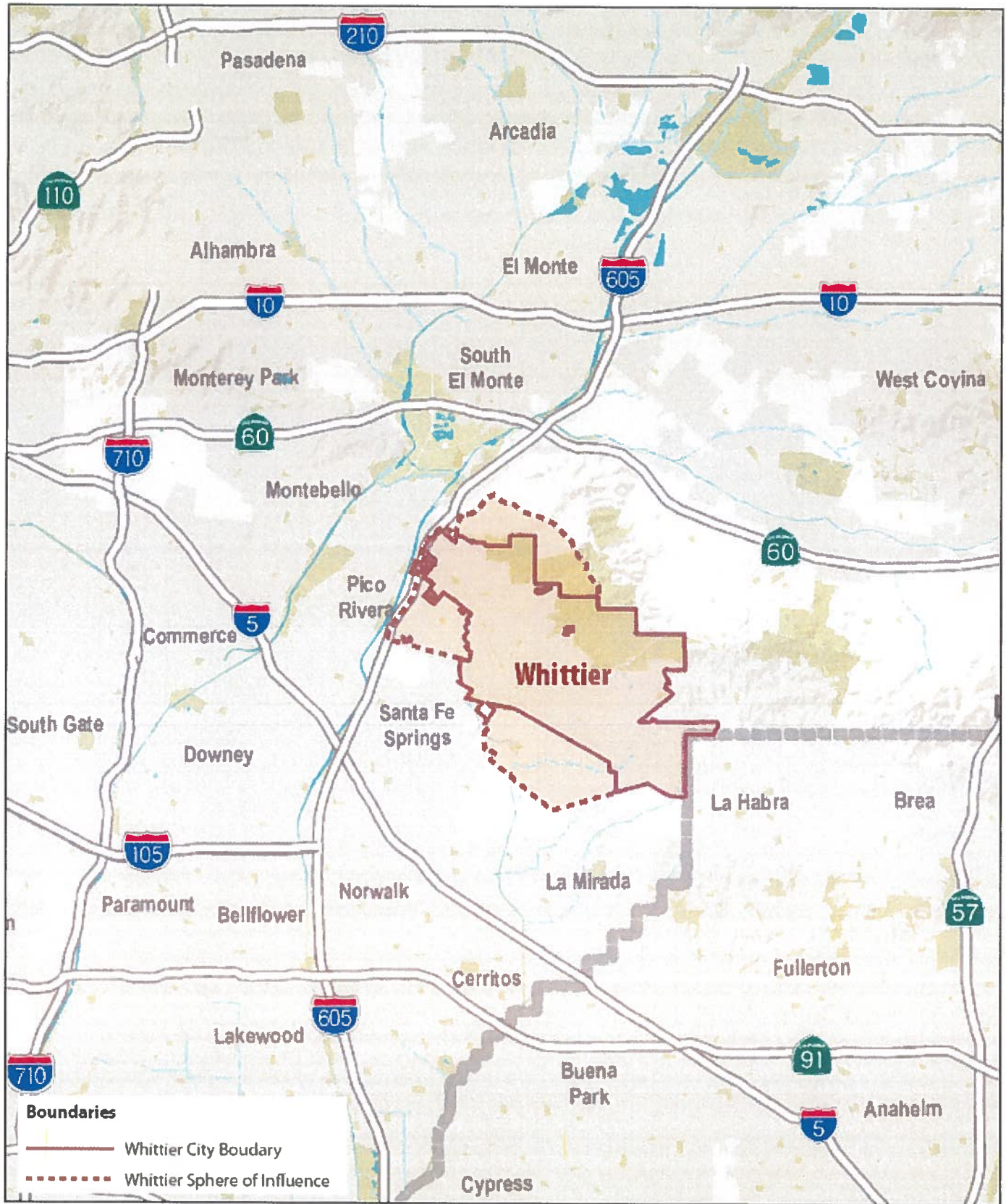
- **Land Use and Planning**
- **Mineral Resources**
- **Noise**
- **Population and Housing**
- **Public Services**
- **Tribal Cultural Resources**
- **Transportation and Circulation**
- **Utilities and Service Systems**
- **Wildfire**
- **Cumulative Impacts**
- **Alternatives**

Exhibit 1
Regional Context Map

Exhibit 2
Planning Area

Exhibit 3
Existing Land Use Plan

Exhibit 4
Proposed Land Use Plan



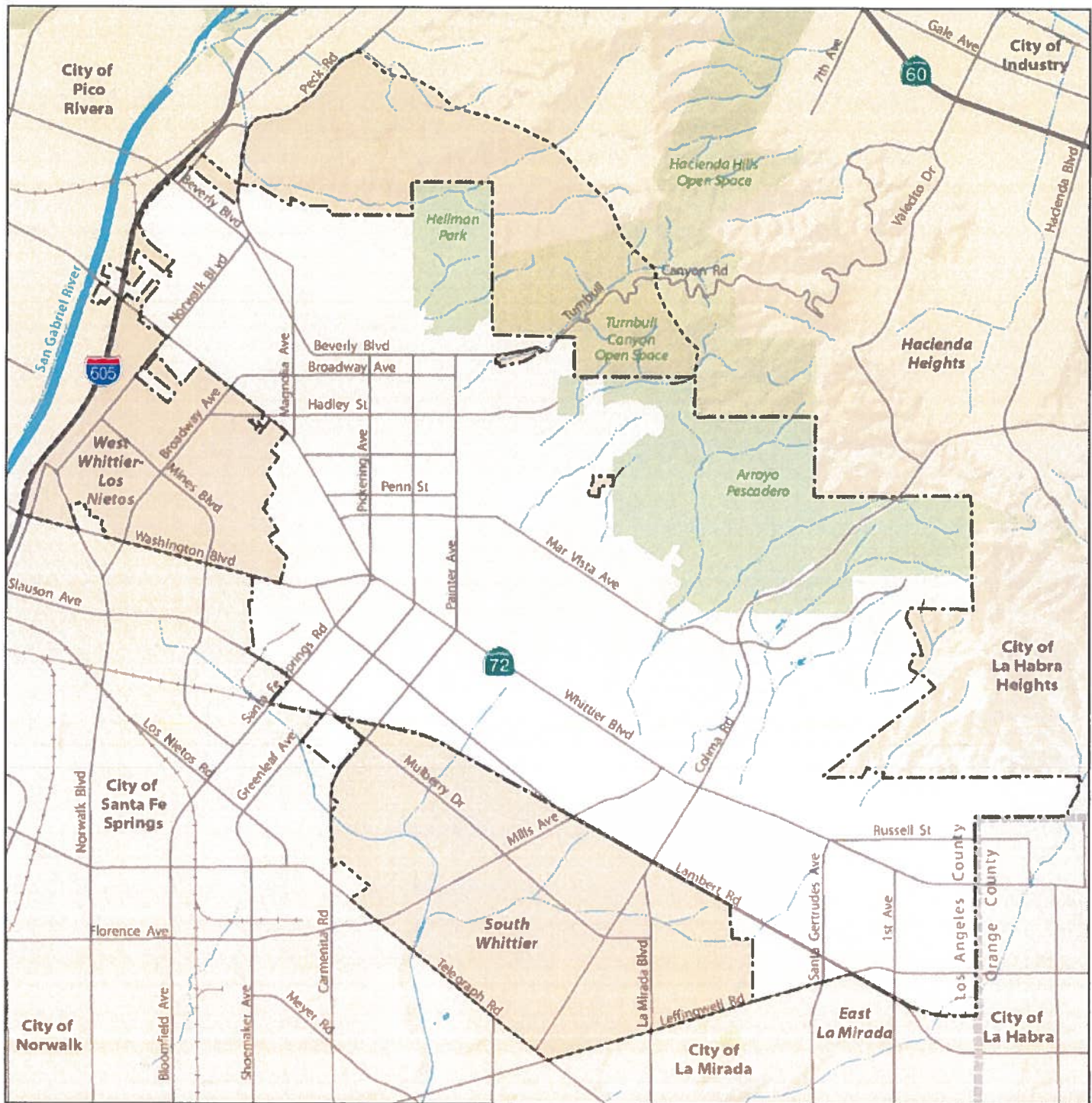
Source: Esri World Terrain Base and Reference, 2020.

<http://www.migcom.com> • 951-787-9222

Exhibit 1 Regional Context Map

Whittier General Plan Update
Whittier, California





Base Map Features

- Whittier City Boundary
- Whittier Sphere of Influence
- County Boundary
- Major Streets
- Freeways
- Railroads
- River and Creeks
- Waterbodies
- Open Space/Natural Areas

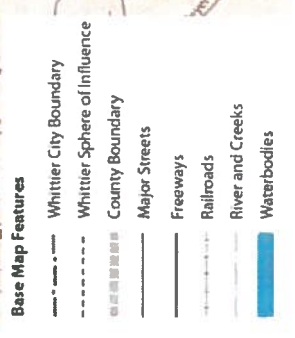
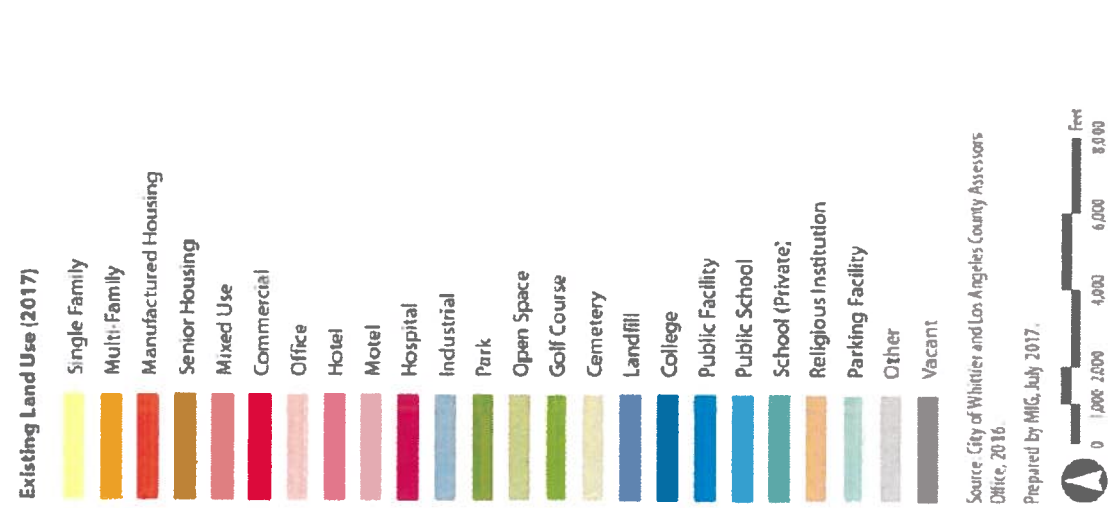
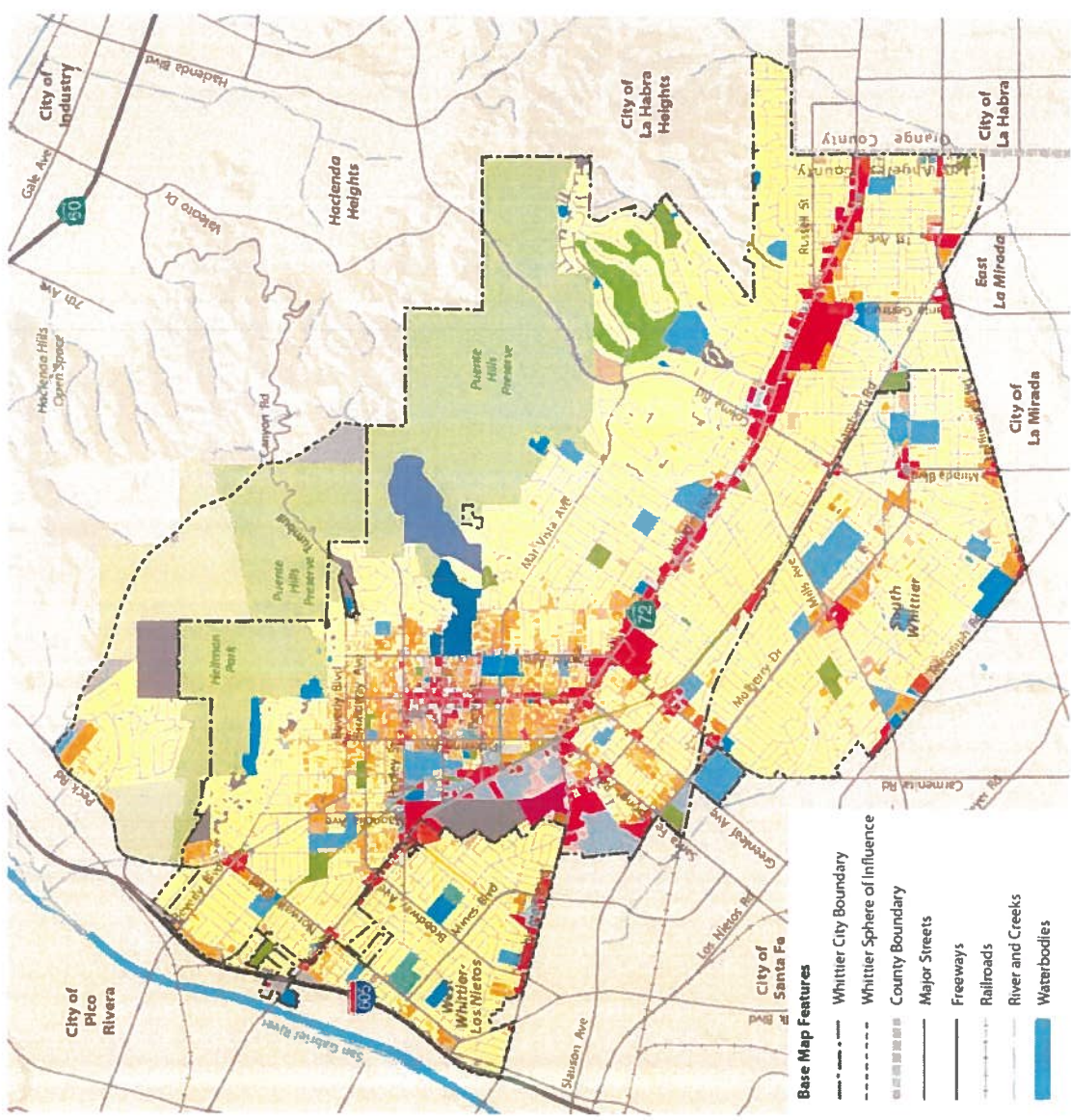
Source: Esri World Terrain Base and Reference, 2020.

<http://www.nig.com> • 951-787-9222

Exhibit 2 Planning Area

Whittier General Plan Update
Whittier, California





Source: City of Garden Grove and RBF, 2008.
<http://www.mig.com> • 951-787-9222



Exhibit 3 Existing Land Use Plan
 Whittier General Plan Update
 Whittier, California

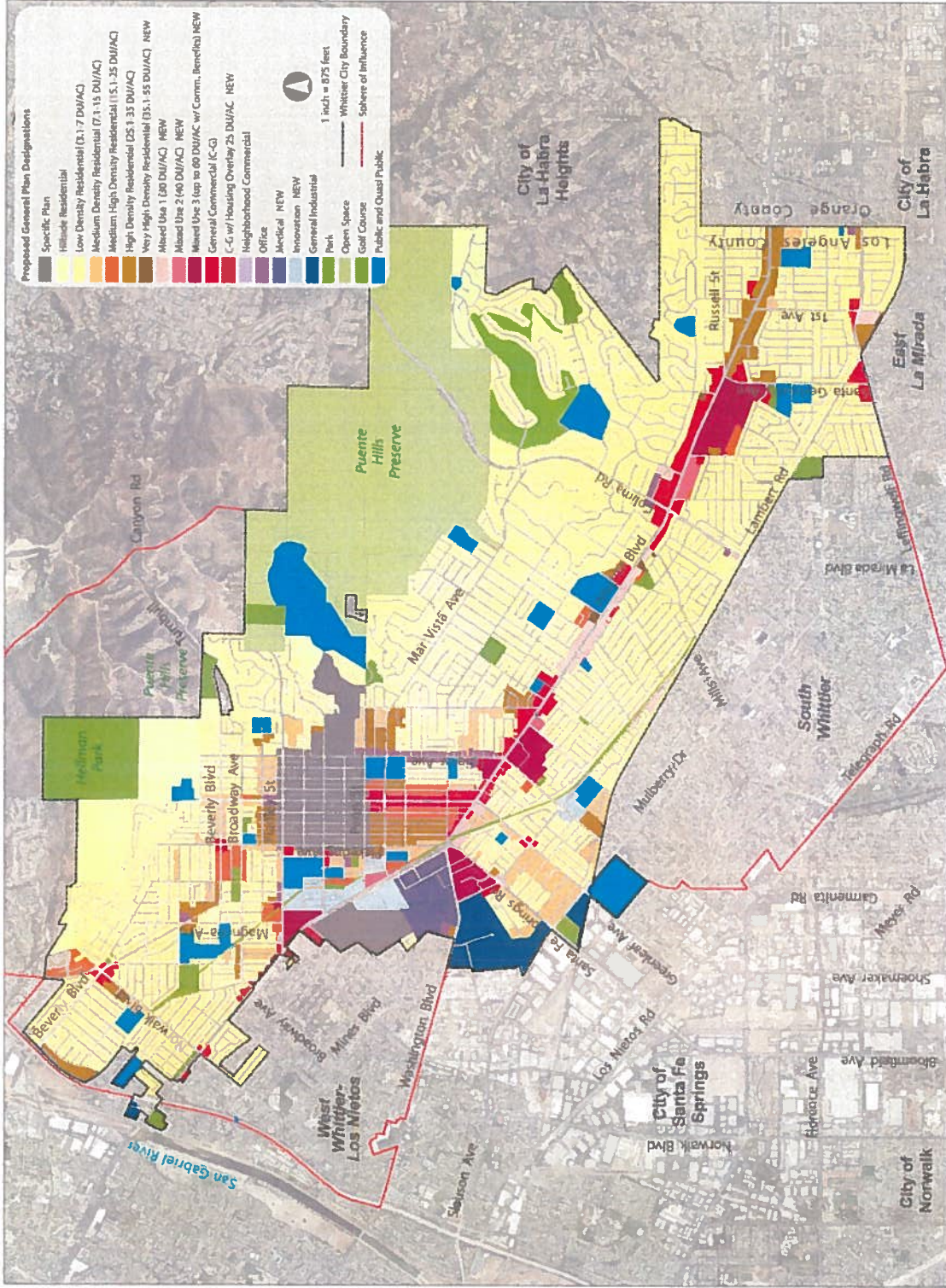


Exhibit 4 Proposed Land Use Plan
 Whittier General Plan Update
 Whittier, California

Source: City of Garden Grove and MIG, 2021
<http://www.mig.com/dms/951793/9222>



