

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is a draft environmental impact report (EIR) that evaluates the potential physical environmental effects that could result from growth and development in accordance with the proposed City of Chula Vista General Plan Update and associated actions. The EIR analysis focuses on two primary components of the proposed General Plan Update: (1) physical development potential and (2) the goals/objectives/policies and subsequent action items/implementation measures.

2.1 Overview of the General Plan

State law (Government Code Section 65300) requires that each city and county adopt a comprehensive general plan. The proposed project fulfills this requirement by updating the City's adopted General Plan, which was last comprehensively updated on July 11, 1989 and subsequently amended in 1993 to include planning for the Otay Ranch project. The General Plan defines the framework by which the City's physical and economic resources are to be managed and used in the future. The General Plan Update's planning horizon is the year 2030. The General Plan not only guides future development within the existing City limits, but also addresses areas within the City's Sphere of Influence and other portions of the General Plan area beyond the City limits.

The General Plan clarifies and articulates the City's intentions with respect to the rights and expectation of the community, including residents, property owners, and businesses. Through the General Plan, the City informs these groups of its goals, policies, and standards, thereby communicating its expectations of the public and private sectors for meeting community objectives. Since the General Plan is the constitution for all future development, any decision by a City affecting land use and development must be consistent with its General Plan. This includes proposed development projects and subdivisions. An action, program, or project would be considered consistent with the General Plan if, considering all of its aspects, it would further the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan and not obstruct their attainment.

The elements of the adopted General Plan are grouped into three main categories: Community Development; Environmental Resources Management; and Hazard Management. Each category reflects specific aspects of development policies. The Issues, Goals, and Objectives section of each element outlines those adopted by the City. The Policies and Guidelines section identifies actions that the City should follow to attain the stated goals. These are then implemented through appropriate subsequently adopted regulatory controls.

The General Plan Update is arranged around 11 chapters. The first four of those chapters are background and guiding information about the city and the vision and themes that

guide the update. The following six chapters (Chapters 5 – 10) provide the objectives and policies of the plan. These include:

- Land Use and Transportation
- Economics
- Housing Element
- Public Facilities and Services
- Environment
- Growth Management

The General Plan Update also adds Chapter 11 that guides implementation of the plans, policies, and proposals.

The General Plan Update includes newly proposed goals, objectives, and policies to implement the community's vision for the future. The policies would be used by the City to guide day-to-day decision making so there is continuing progress towards attainment of goals and objectives. The proposed project that is analyzed in this EIR, including associated actions beyond the General Plan Update, is described in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.2 General Plan Proposed Land Uses and Scenarios

Under the proposed Chula Vista General Plan Update, the City would be organized into four planning areas (Northwest, Southwest, Bayfront, and East) and a number of subareas (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). Much of the city is made up of stable single-family neighborhoods and other areas where few, if any, changes are anticipated. The proposed amendments apply to certain subareas and districts within the Northwest, Southwest, and East Planning Areas. Several districts within these planning areas contain focus areas for which policies have been formulated to address issues which are unique to these areas.

For the purpose of this EIR, geographic terminology is important. Consistent reference is made to “planning areas” and to “update areas.” The planning areas refer to the Northwest, Southwest, East and Bayfront Planning Areas of the General Plan area. The update areas refer to the specific areas within those three planning areas wherein land use and circulation changes are proposed. The Northwest Planning Area lies north of L Street between I-5 and I-805; the Southwest Planning Area lies south of L Street between I-5 and I-805; the East Planning Area lies east of I-805, and the Bayfront Planning Area lies west of I-5 overlooking the San Diego Bay. The city is organized into a hierarchy of geographic areas for discussion and policy purposes. This hierarchy within the Chula Vista General Plan area is listed below and shown on Figures 3-3 through 3-5 and Chart 3.5-1 in the Project Description section of this report.

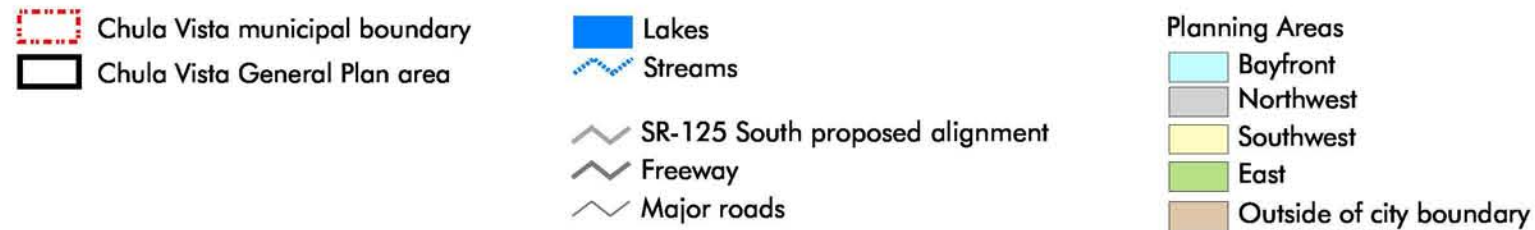
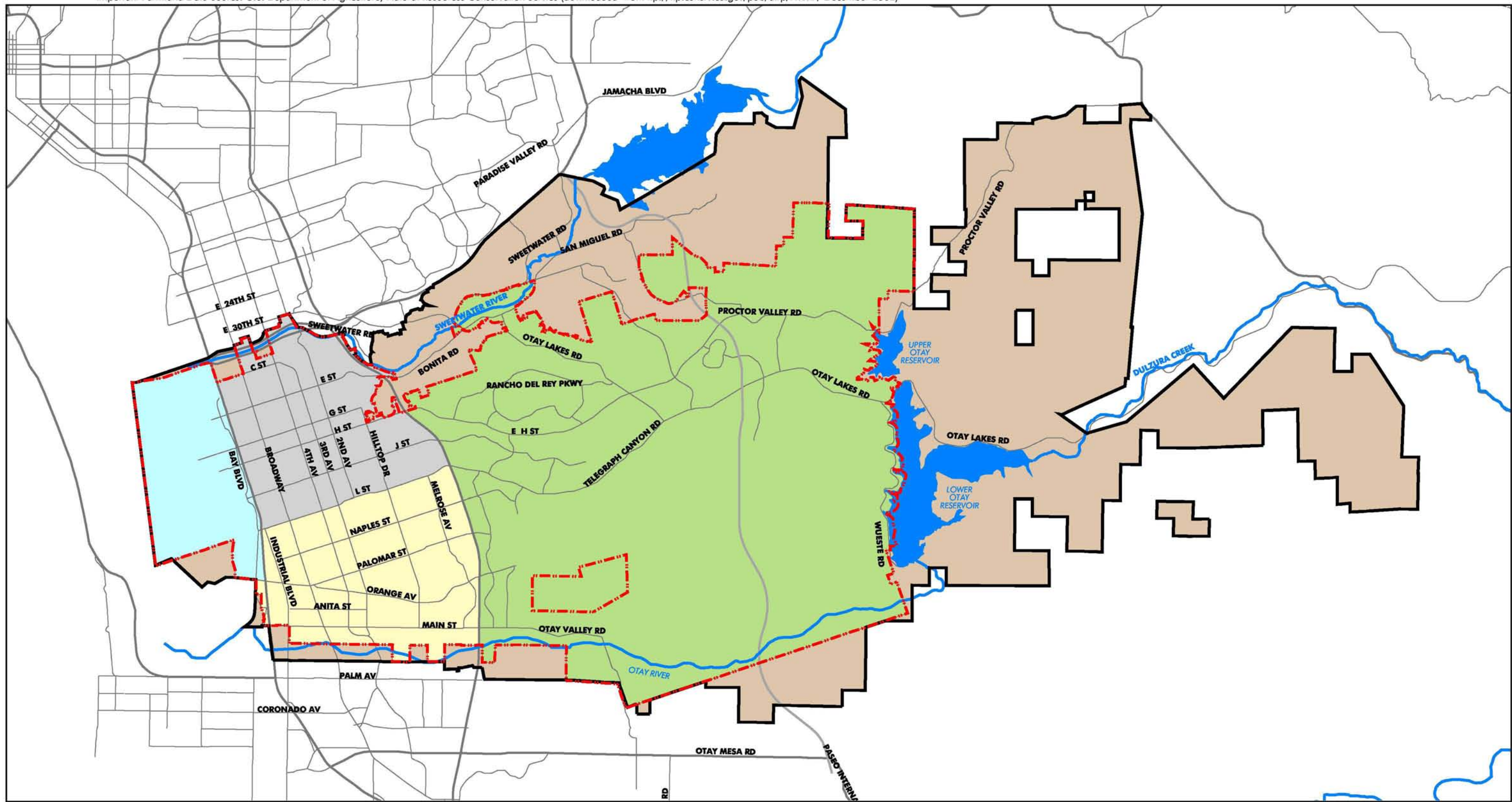


FIGURE 2-1
Planning Areas

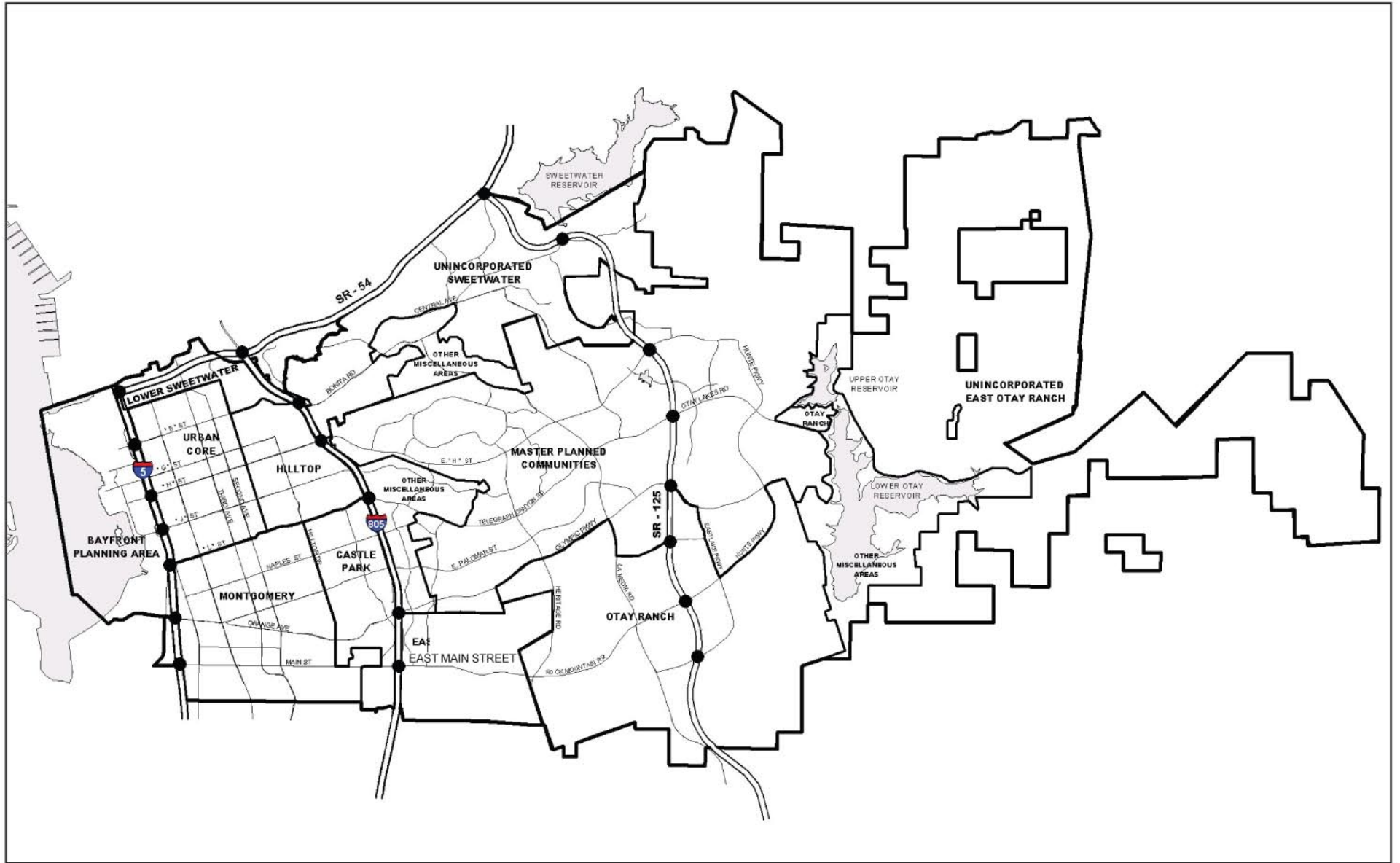


Figure 2-2
Proposed Subareas within Planning Areas

1. Planning Area
 2. Subarea
 3. District
 4. Focus Area

This terminology is employed to distinguish these areas from the following planning areas designated in the adopted General Plan:

1. The Sweetwater Planning Area
2. The Bayfront Planning Area
3. The Montgomery Planning Area
4. The Central Planning Area
5. The Eastern Territories Planning Area

Each of the five planning areas listed above have their own area plan in the adopted General Plan. The Bayfront area is not amended as part of this update, and the Sweetwater Area Plan has been incorporated into the new East Planning Area Plan. The former Sweetwater and Eastern Territories planning areas have been integrated into the proposed East Planning Area. The former Montgomery Planning Area is now included within the proposed Southwest Planning Area, which includes other areas south of L Street and west of I-805 (the Castle Park Subarea). There are also two small proposed additions, the southernmost portion of the Bayfront Planning Area, south of Palomar Street, and the portion of the West Fairfield area within the city of San Diego that is not within the adopted General Plan area. The Montgomery label is proposed to be applied to the Montgomery Subarea of the Southwest Planning Area. The General Plan Update does not propose any changes in the land use designations for the Bayfront Planning Area located in the westernmost portion of Chula Vista, although as stated above, the southernmost portion of the Bayfront Planning Area, south of Palomar Street, is proposed to become part of the Southwest Planning Area.

Three preliminary land use and circulation scenarios were developed as part of the outreach program for the General Plan Update. Each scenario identified possible land use and circulation changes within portions of the Northwest, Southwest, and East Planning Areas. After intensive analysis and extensive community input, a Preferred Plan was developed with input from the General Plan Update Steering Committee.

The existing and proposed population and number of dwelling units are presented in Table 2-1. The Preferred Plan and the three preliminary scenarios are described in detail in Chapter 3 and are analyzed in this EIR.

TABLE 2-1
PROJECT STATISTICS BY SCENARIO

		Planning Area				Total GPU Area	Incorporated Area
		Northwest	Southwest	East	Bayfront		
Existing Conditions	Dwelling Units	19,711	18,368	36,152	–	74,231	70,067
	Population	56,931	53,562	111,807	–	222,300	209,200
Adopted Plan	Dwelling Units	21,140	18,851	57,046	1,000	98,037	89,124
	Population	59,011	53,372	169,411	2,519	284,300*	257,376
Preferred Plan	Dwelling Units	27,497	22,281	64,315	1,000	115,093	105,762
	Population	74,861	61,790	187,655	2,519	326,900*	298,529
Scenario 1	Dwelling Units	27,749	21,806	61,581	1,000	112,136	102,805
	Population	75,624	60,687	181,013	2,519	319,843	291,546
Scenario 2	Dwelling Units	26,323	22,527	65,508	1,000	115,358	106,027
	Population	71,850	62,442	191,323	2,519	328,134	299,837
Scenario 3	Dwelling Units	26,837	23,124	59,203	1,000	110,164	100,833
	Population	73,327	63,920	174,187	2,519	313,953	285,656

*Totals vary due to rounding.

2.3 General Plan Update Process

The General Plan team of staff and consultants prepared baseline and areawide studies for the City of Chula Vista. These baselines studies were prepared to present the most recent data available for the City of Chula Vista. The reports included a description of current regulatory requirements that would be relevant to planning and development of the city, as well as a description of current planning activities in the region. The baseline and areawide studies addressed aspects of the community that were considered in the planning process, such as circulation, public services and facilities, biological resources, geology, paleontology, cultural resources, noise, and air quality. These documents provided much of the technical background data necessary to prepare this EIR.

The City has maintained a website (http://www.chulavistaca.gov/City_Services/Development_Services/Planning_Building/General_Plan/default.asp) to regularly disseminate General Plan Update information. Workshops, the Internet, and community meetings were part of an extensive outreach program to involve the public in the update of the General Plan. As part of the public outreach and participation program for the General Plan Update, the City Council authorized the formation of citizen committees. The committees helped guide the process and assisted in preparation of the Update by providing a means for ongoing involvement by key community stakeholder interests (e.g., education, business, environment, housing, community services, etc.), select City boards and commissions, and residents.

The committee structure consisted of a Steering Committee and three Subcommittees related to major topic areas of the General Plan Update: Economic Development; Environment, Open Space & Sustainable Development; and Infrastructure & Services. Each Subcommittee consisted of 13 to 14 people and included representation from City boards and commissions, community organizations and residents. The Steering Committee consisted of 13 members, including one representative from each of the Subcommittees.

The Steering Committee provided oversight to the General Plan Update process, and facilitated communication among key stakeholders by providing a conduit for sharing information, issues, and the perspectives of diverse interests in the community. Its principal tasks were to synthesize information coming from various technical studies and the Subcommittees in the preparation of an overall vision for Chula Vista, in the development of land use and transportation scenarios, and reviewing the draft Land Use and Transportation Element.

The three Subcommittees served as a means to identify and discuss issues and concerns, key goals, and objectives related to their respective focus areas. They also reviewed information from related technical studies, and reviewed those draft General Plan elements pertinent to the focus of their respective committees.

Several key workshops conducted to solicit public input and to provide a forum for the City Council to provide policy direction are discussed below:

- Chula Vista Vision 2020 – A Community Festival was held on Saturday, April 27, 2002, which was a kick-off event for public participation in the General Plan Update. The event was an opportunity for members of the community to identify important issues needed to be addressed through the General Plan Update process. This event consisted of three Town Hall-type discussion sessions, an ideas comment area where participants could provide additional input, and an information area for participants to gather information and have questions answered.
- Summer/Fall 2002 – A “visioneering” program for citizens volunteering to identify the public’s desires for Chula Vista, with over 4,000 comments received.
- Winter/Spring 2003 – Work by four Citizens Advisory Committees to help prepare the draft vision and goals and preliminary planning concepts. These committees included an overall Steering Committee and three subcommittees tied to major topic areas of the update: economic development; environment, open space, and sustainable development; and infrastructure and services. The committees continued to provide guidance as the updated plan was prepared.
- June 21, 2003 – A Town Hall II public meeting was held to present and get community feedback on the draft vision and goals; preliminary land use and transportation concepts for select areas of the city; and other citywide plans.
- November 15, 17, and 19, 2003 – Three Town Hall III workshops were held in the Northwest, Southwest, and East Planning Areas to show the public the land use concepts prepared based on community input and other sources. The purpose of these meetings was to get community input on more detailed land use concepts. There were three General Plan Scenarios presented at these meetings.
- January 14, 2004 – A joint City Council and Planning Commission workshop was held to get feedback on the three General Plan Land Use Scenarios.
- June 21, 2004 – A meeting was held to show the public the Land Use Scenarios recommended by the Steering Committee. The purpose of this Steering Committee meeting was to get community input on their recommended Land Use Scenario.
- January 27, 2005 – General Plan Update Public Information Meeting and Open House.

- February 15, 2005 – City Council/Planning Commission General Plan Update Joint Workshop providing General Plan Update Overview.
- February 24, 2005 – City Council/Planning Commission General Plan Update Joint Workshop providing focusing on East Area Land Use.
- August 18, 2005 – City Council/Planning Commission Joint Meeting focusing on Western Chula Vista Land Use.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR was prepared and circulated for the proposed project in August 2004. The NOP and comments received in response are included in Appendix A. A public scoping meeting was held by the City on August 30, 2004, to solicit public input on the scope of issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR. A Draft EIR was prepared and circulated for the proposed project on December 31, 2004. In compliance with CEQA, the public review period for the Draft EIR was 45 days. A Planning Commission hearing was held to take oral comments and close the public review period on February 14, 2005. Based on the comments received during the public review period, the City has identified policy changes that would lessen the environmental effects and strengthen mitigation measures. Because of the interest of the public in the issues involved with this document, the Draft EIR has been revised and recirculated in accordance with Section 15088.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of this recirculation is to include additional updated information regarding the proposed plan update and include expanded analyses. In accordance with Section 15088.5(f)(1), when an EIR is substantially revised and the entire document is recirculated, the lead agency may require reviewers to submit new comments and are not required to respond to those comments received during the earlier circulation period. In conformance with this section, the City is not responding to those comments received in response to the previous document. New comments are required by the end of the public review period for the recirculated General Plan Update EIR. The City of Chula Vista will respond to these comments submitted for the revised EIR. While the City of Chula Vista will not respond to the earlier comments, those comments will be part of the administrative record.

2.4 Environmental Review Procedure

In accordance with CEQA, the City of Chula Vista is the lead agency for the preparation and adoption of this EIR. This document will provide environmental information to other agencies affected by the project, or which are likely to have an interest in the project. Various agencies exercise control over certain aspects of the study area, including but not limited to the following:

- California Air Resources Board (CARB)
- California Department of Conservation

- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
- California Office of Emergency Services
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Chula Vista Elementary School District
- City of National City
- City of San Diego
- County of San Diego
- Otay Water District
- San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)
- Sweetwater Authority
- Sweetwater Union High School District
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

This EIR will be subject to review and comment by the general public as well as by interested jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations. A public hearing will be held following the end of the 45-day public review period by the Planning Commission to solicit oral comments on the adequacy of the Draft EIR.

Following the public review period, a final EIR will be prepared which will address the written and oral comments received during the public review period. The Chula Vista Planning Commission and City Council will review and consider the public comments and responses to comments incorporated into the final EIR in making their recommendations and decisions with respect to the proposed General Plan Update and associated actions.

2.5 Purpose and Scope of the Environmental Impact Report

This EIR assesses the environmental impacts of the City of Chula Vista's General Plan Update and associated actions. It constitutes a Program EIR under the provisions of Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines. A Program EIR allows for review of a series of contemplated actions. The City of Chula Vista and other agencies will be able to use information presented in this Program EIR to determine if additional environmental review is required for subsequent actions linked to the project. All subsequent discretionary actions requiring environmental review will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. Under Section 15168, if an agency determines that a program or action will result in impacts within the scope of the impacts reported in the EIR and that no further mitigation is required, the agency may deem the subsequent project to be within the scope of the EIR, and no further environmental review will be required. This

EIR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. The major purposes of this EIR are:

- To identify current and projected environmental conditions which may affect or be affected by growth planned for through the proposed General Plan Update;
- To disclose potential environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan Update to the public and to the decision makers;
- To inform the public and to foster public participation in the City's planning process;
- To identify mitigation measures which could eliminate or reduce potentially significant environmental impacts; and
- To evaluate alternatives that might be environmentally superior to the proposed General Plan Update.

The intent of the analysis in this EIR is the determination of whether the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment. A significant effect on the environment is defined as a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions which exist in the area affected by the proposed project. When a significant effect is identified, the EIR identifies measures or alternatives that would substantially reduce that effect. For the General Plan Update, measures to lessen significant effects fall into three categories: (1) policies included in the General Plan that avoid significant effect are identified as "self-mitigated"; (2) measures that when implemented reduce significant effects to a level less than significant; and (3) alternatives to the Preferred Plan or other Scenarios that would lessen or avoid significant effects. Ultimately, significant effects have been identified for which sufficient mitigation is not available to lessen such effects to below a level of significance.

It has been determined that the proposed project may cause significant, adverse environmental effects and potentially significant indirect, direct, and cumulative environmental effects. In accordance with CEQA requirements, the environmental impact analysis outlines the environmental setting of the project, and identifies potential environmental impacts, significance of the potential impacts, and mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potentially significant adverse environmental impacts. In accordance with CEQA, this EIR also addresses cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, effects found not to be significant, and irreversible environmental effects, and also contains an alternatives analysis.