

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and
Notice of Public Scoping Meeting**

Project: San Diego River Fire Hazard Mitigation Plan

Project Case Files: Environmental Impact Report ENV-2026-0001

Project Proponent: City of Santee

Project Location: The almost 300-acre Project Site is composed of 32 parcels along the San Diego River corridor through the center of the City of Santee as shown in Figure 1, Project Location. The Project Site extends along the river corridor from Forester Creek at the western boundary to the Lakeside boundary in the east, including Mast Park West, Mast Park Wetland Restoration Area, Mast Park East, Mission Creek, Walker Trails Open Space, and Walker Preserve. Surrounding the corridor are urban neighborhoods, commercial districts, transportation infrastructure, parks, and open space preserves, creating a landscape typical of a wildland-urban interface (WUI).

Environmental Impact Report: The City of Santee (City) is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the implementation of the San Diego River Fire Hazard Mitigation Plan (Project). The City will be the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the project. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) describes the proposed Project that will be analyzed in the EIR and identifies areas of probable environmental effects of the project.

As specified in the CEQA Guidelines, the NOP will be circulated for a 30-day scoping period. Agencies, organizations, and interested members of the public are invited to provide input on the scope of the environmental analysis. If you are a responsible or trustee agency, the views of your agency are requested as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. If no response or well-justified request for additional time is received by any responsible agency or trustee agency by the end of the review period, we presume that these agencies have no response. All comments concerning the scope of the EIR must be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

Harley Wallace, Fire Chief
Santee Fire Department Administration 10601 Magnolia Avenue
Santee, California 92071
HWallace@CityofSanteeCa.gov
(619) 258-4100 ext. 207

Electronic comments whose file size exceeds 10 MB must request a link to upload the comments. The NOP comment period begins on **February 6, 2026** and closes at **5:00 p.m. on March 6, 2026**. The City will consider all written comments received during the noticed public scoping period in the preparation of the EIR.

Public Scoping Meeting:

The City will hold a scoping meeting to provide an opportunity to submit comments on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. The public scoping meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 18, 2026** at City Hall, 10601 Magnolia Avenue, Santee, CA 92071 in the Council Chambers, from **5:00 PM to 6:30 PM**. All parties are welcome to attend and are encouraged to recommend environmental issues, mitigation measures, and alternatives to the project that they believe should be addressed in the EIR.

Project Background and Description:

The City of Santee Fire Department has initiated development of the San Diego River Fire Hazard Mitigation Plan (FHMP) to reduce wildfire risk in and around high-priority sites along the San Diego River corridor. This area lies within the wildland-urban interface and includes critical public infrastructure, adjacent residential neighborhoods, and biologically sensitive habitats. The need for a targeted, ecologically conscious approach to vegetation management is underscored by increasing fire risk, invasive plant encroachment, and complex access and ownership constraints unique to the corridor. The Santee Fire Department responded to 174 fires in or near the Project Site in 2024 and 2025. Portions of the Project Site are located within Moderate and High, Fire Hazard Severity Zones. As part of the FHMP, a Fuels Treatment Plan (FTP) will provide a framework for vegetation management that includes treatment strategies tailored to each of the parcels' wildfire exposure, access conditions, existing vegetation, and proximity to sensitive resources. The FTP outlines defensible space creation/maintenance standards, prescribes vegetation treatments, and identifies zone boundaries to minimize wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface. It also documents the species and quantities of vegetation to be removed, defines potential removal processes, and incorporates best management practices to minimize or avoid impacts to resources in the project site.

The objectives of the proposed project are identified below:

- Objective 1 – Define strategy for defined fuel treatment zones for reducing hazardous fuel loads within the San Diego River corridor.
- Objective 2 – Enhance community safety within the City of Santee through the reduction of wildfire risk.
- Objective 3 – Reduce horizontal and vertical continuity of fuels and hazardous fuel loads through the removal of non-native and invasive species.
- Objective 4 – Reduce ignition potential and fire intensity within the San Diego River corridor.

Discretionary Actions:

The City Council actions that would be considered for the proposed project include, but would not be limited to:

- Adopt the San Diego River Fire Hazard Mitigation Plan, including the Fuels Treatment Plan
- Certify the EIR for the San Diego River Fire Hazard Mitigation Plan

Project Alternatives:

The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of project alternatives that would feasibly attain most of the project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, including the required No Project Alternative. The EIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected as infeasible and explain the rationale for this determination.

Potential Environmental Effect Areas:

The EIR will describe the reasonably foreseeable and potentially significant adverse effects of the proposed project (both direct and indirect) and identify which are found to be less than significant. The EIR will also evaluate the cumulative impacts of the project when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The EIR will evaluate all of the topic areas, as follows:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Wildfire

As environmental documentation for this project is completed, it will be available for review at the City's Fire Department located in Building 5 and at the City Clerk's Office in Building 3 at Santee City Hall, 10601 Magnolia Avenue, Santee CA 92071, and online at:

<https://www.cityofsanteca.gov/services/project-environmental-review>

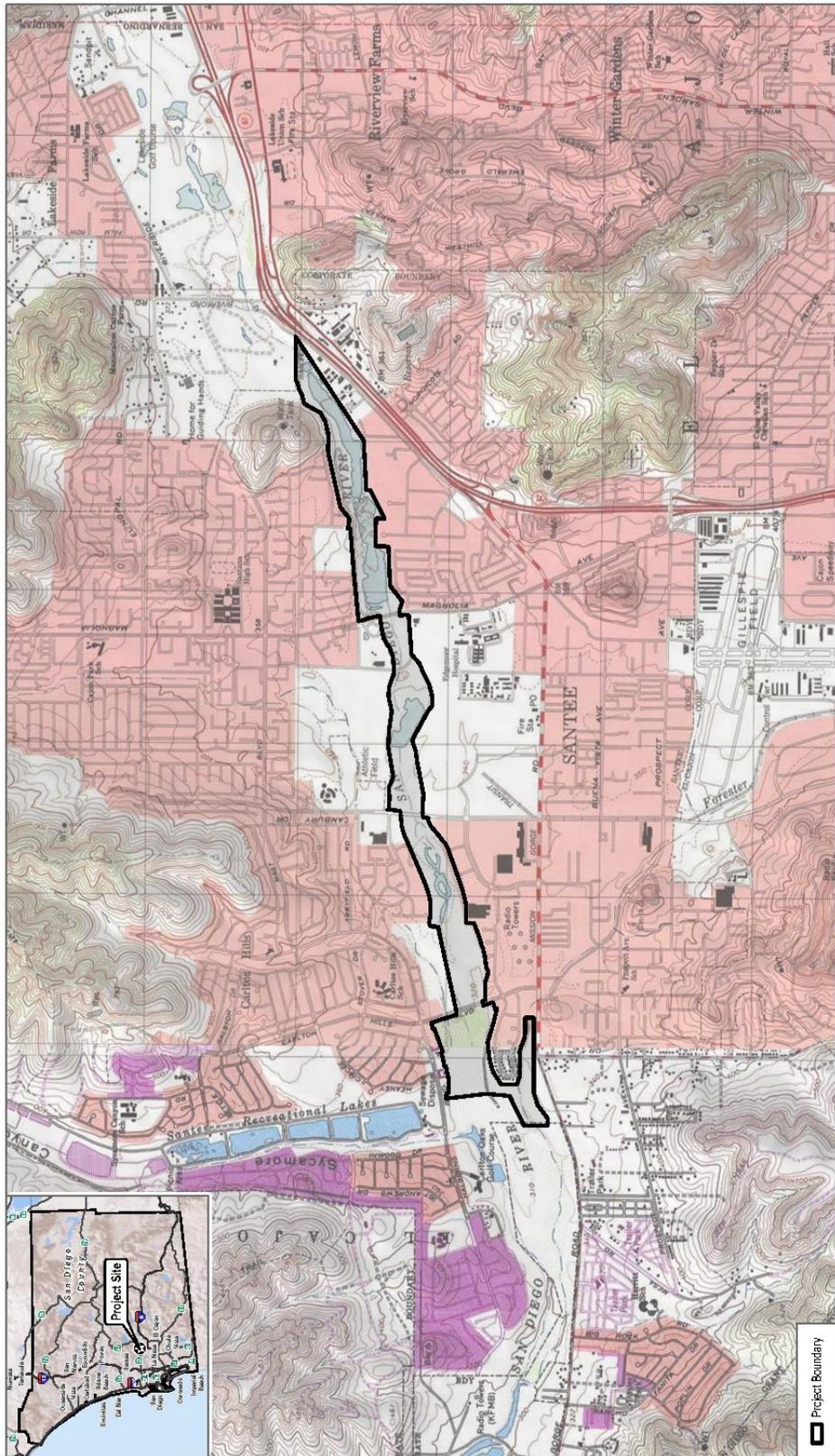


FIGURE 1
Project Location
 Notice of Preparation

SOURCE: USGS 7.5-Minute Series La Mesa and El Cajon Quadrangles

