



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE**

TO: Recipient
DATE: March 23, 2009
SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
REPORT FOR THE DIAMOND SPECIFIC PLAN**

Lead Agency:

City of Lake Elsinore
130 South Main Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
Contact: Carole Donahoe, Planning Consultant

The City of Lake Elsinore will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above-referenced project. In compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Lake Elsinore is sending this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to responsible agencies, interested parties and federal agencies which may be involved in approving or permitting the project, and to trustee agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the project. Within 30 days after receiving the NOP, each agency is requested to provide the City of Lake Elsinore with specific details about the scope and content of the environmental information to be contained in the EIR related to that agency's area of statutory responsibility. The purpose of this NOP is to solicit the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. A 30-day review and comment period for this NOP is provided under State law. Please have your response postmarked by **April 23, 2009**. Please send your response to **Ms. Carole Donahoe** at the address shown above. Please provide the contact information for your agency including, name, phone number and e-mail address.

According to Section 15206 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Diamond Specific Plan meets the criteria for projects of statewide, regional, or area wide significance. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15082 (c) (1) of the CEQA Guidelines, the City is hosting a public scoping meeting to provide an opportunity for public agencies and members of the public to provide input as to the scope and content of the environmental information. Meeting and project details are as follows:

Date: March 31, 2009
Time: 2:00-3:00 PM
Location: Lake Elsinore City Hall, Conference Room A
130 South Main Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

PROJECT LOCATION

The Diamond Specific Plan (proposed project) is located in the City of Lake Elsinore, in the southwest portion of Riverside County (Figure 1). The project site is accessed from Interstate 15 by existing roadways including Diamond Drive and Lakeshore Drive (Figure 2).

Portions of the project site are developed with the Diamond Stadium baseball park, a parking lot surrounding the stadium, and approximately 80,000 square feet (sq. ft.) of retail commercial and office uses in the existing Lake Elsinore Valley Center (LEVC) along the Lakeshore Drive frontage (Figure 3).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

East Lake Specific Plan Amendment

The majority of the project site is currently within the East Lake Specific Plan (ELSP), which was originally adopted in 1993. The ELSP was developed with the intention of creating a 3,000-acre master planned community in an area that was once not developable due to erratic flooding conditions associated with Lake Elsinore. This area is now developable due to the implementation of the Lake Management Plan and construction of flood management measures, including, but not limited to, the Spring Street outflow channel, the reinforced overflow weir, and the 3.3-mile long/30-foot high earthen levee at the south end of the ELSP area. The ELSP has been amended eight times since 1993 to modify the land use plan and development standards to better fit the subsequently proposed projects. In addition, the City is in the process of updating the Lake Elsinore General Plan to create a unique District Plan called the Ballpark District that establishes and guides a specific vision for the project area. The Ballpark District includes the northeastern portion of the ELSP. Pursuant to the Specific Plan land use designation in the Ballpark District Plan, this vision can best be achieved with a specific plan that is tailored for the proposed project.

The proposed project includes an amendment to the ELSP to remove 86.4 acres from the ELSP and place the majority of that acreage within a new specific plan called “The Diamond” Specific plan. The ELSP Amendment 9 (SPA 9 or Amendment 9) project area is located along both sides of Diamond Drive between Lakeshore/Mission Trail and Malaga Road, with a small portion on the south side of Malaga Road at the southwest corner of Malaga Road and Diamond Drive (Figure 4, ELSP Amendment 9 Project Area Boundary). The removal of the Amendment 9 project area results in the removal of the Stadium, approximately 52 acres of commercial development area, and 7.5 acres of area designated as open space. The 87.2 acre The Diamond Specific Plan will consist of an approximately 81.6 acre mixed use commercial/entertainment development adjacent to the ball park. The remaining 10 acres not part of The Diamond Specific Plan have been included in Amendment 9 at the request of the City to prevent the formation of a non-contiguous portion of the ELSP. These ten acres located in the northeast portion of the ELSP Amendment area will not be included in the Diamond Specific Plan but is proposed for the Commercial Mixed-Use General Plan land use designation consistent with the City’s General Plan.

The amendment to the ELSP will result in changes that are primarily related to mapping and statistical modifications to reflect the reduction in the ELSP area and land use yield associated with the amendment area. The mapping changes are focused on the ELSP boundary and Land Use Plan. Because the road and utility infrastructure systems have been completed around the ELSP Amendment 9 project area, no revisions are expected to the other ELSP plans (e.g., Circulation Plan, Infrastructure, etc.) The EIR will analyze any potential environmental impacts of development within the area associated with ELSP Amendment 9.

The Diamond Specific Plan #2009 01

The Diamond Specific Plan is intended to provide the necessary master planning to implement the goals and objectives of the Ballpark District. The proposed project is a master planned, mixed use development providing for commercial, office, educational, entertainment, and residential uses. Supporting uses will include parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, plazas and open space as shown on Figure 5, The Diamond Land Use Plan. Table 1 provides a statistical summary breakdown of the land use plan. A conceptual land use program that could be implemented via the Specific Plan is listed in Table 2.

The Specific Plan will also include comprehensive development guidelines and implementation measures to ensure the creation of a vibrant commercial center and entertainment area, and a livable community with readily accessible amenities, attractive streetscapes, and public places. Non-residential Floor Area Ratios (FARs) and residential density will also be consistent with the Commercial Mixed Use and Tourist Commercial use development criteria outlined in the City of Lake Elsinore General Plan, designated at up to 0.80 FAR and 18 dwelling units per acre (DU/AC), respectively.

Table 1. The Diamond Specific Plan Land Use Statistical Summary

Specific Plan Land Use Category	Acreage (AC)	Max Density ¹ /Floor Area Ratio (FAR) ²
Mixed-Use	81.6	18 DU/AC/0.80 FAR
Roads	5.6	
Total	87.2	

1 Density is considered Gross Density, calculated based on the number of dwelling units (DU) divided by the total land area of the Specific Plan. The Density of a particular development/planning area may exceed the General Plan allowed density provided the overall Density for the Project Site does not exceed the General Plan density.

2 FAR is calculated based on the total floor area square footage (SF) of all enclosed nonresidential structures divided by the total land area of the Specific Plan. Parking structures and other ancillary structures are not included in the FAR calculation. The FAR of a particular development/planning area may exceed the General Plan allowed FAR provided the overall FAR for the Project Site does not exceed the General Plan FAR.

Table 2. The Diamond Conceptual Land Use Program

Specific Plan Land Use Category	Anticipated Land Uses	Dwelling Units (DU)/ Square Footage (SF)	Target Density/FAR ¹
Mixed Use ²	Retail/Restaurants/ Hotel/Office/ Entertainment/ Stadium (existing) ³ / Education Center/ Residential/ Lake/Plazas/ Trails	897,000 SF 150 Rooms ⁴ 600 DU ⁵	18 DU/AC/0.40

1 FAR is calculated based on the total floor area SF of all enclosed nonresidential structures divided by the total land area of the Specific Plan. Parking structures and other ancillary structures are not included in the FAR calculation. The FAR of a particular development/planning area may exceed the General Plan allowed and target FAR provided the overall FAR for the Project Site does not exceed the General Plan FAR.

2 Permits a variety of regional serving commercial uses including retail, office, medical, entertainment, hotel with conference rooms and comparable uses. Residential units may be incorporated in mixed use structures or as free standing units, provided that the total vehicle trips attributable to the exclusive development of commercial uses in the area are not exceeded.

3 Existing floor area of the Diamond stadium (50,000 SF) is in addition to the maximum floor area as shown in Table 3, Land Use Statistical Summary.

4 The SF of the approximately 150 room hotel is not included in the total Mixed Use SF (897,000 SF).

5 The SF of the residential portion of the Mixed Use designation is not included in the total Mixed Use SF. Allowed residential development is based on density. Density is considered Gross Density, calculated based on the number of DU divided by the total land area of the Specific Plan. The Density of a particular development/planning area may exceed the General Plan allowed and target density provided the overall Density for the Project Site does not exceed the General Plan density.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Based upon technical analysis and supporting information, the City has determined that the proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts, and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the appropriate CEQA document. The environmental topics that will be addressed in the Draft EIR are as follows:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems

The EIR will also identify alternatives to the proposed project that would be capable of reducing or eliminating one or more of the significant environmental effects of the proposed project.

The following two issue areas will not be discussed in the EIR because less than significant impacts have been identified.

Agriculture Resources

Based upon review of the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the project site is not identified as containing Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, nor is the project site used for agricultural uses. Also, the project site is not adjacent to Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland.

Furthermore, the project site is not under a Williamson Act contract. The project is partially zoned under the jurisdiction of the East Lake Specific Plan (ELSP). Within the ELSP, the site is zoned as General Commercial (GC), Open Space (OS), and Special Alternative Use (Diamond Stadium). The project site area outside of the ELSP is zoned for Neighborhood Commercial (C1). No conflicts are known to exist to agricultural land; therefore, no impact is identified for this issue area. No agricultural land exists within the site or adjoins the site. The proposed project would not involve any other changes to the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to agricultural resources.

Mineral Resources

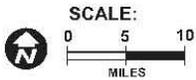
The project site is not known to have any mineral resource that may be of value to the region or State. Further, the project site is not designated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site by any plan, as indicated in the City’s General Plan. Therefore, there is no opportunity to affect mineral resources, and implementation of the proposed project would have no impact on this issue area.

As identified above, please have your response postmarked by **April 23, 2009** and send to **Ms. Carole Donahoe** at the address shown above.

Signature: 

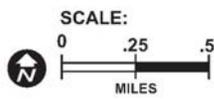
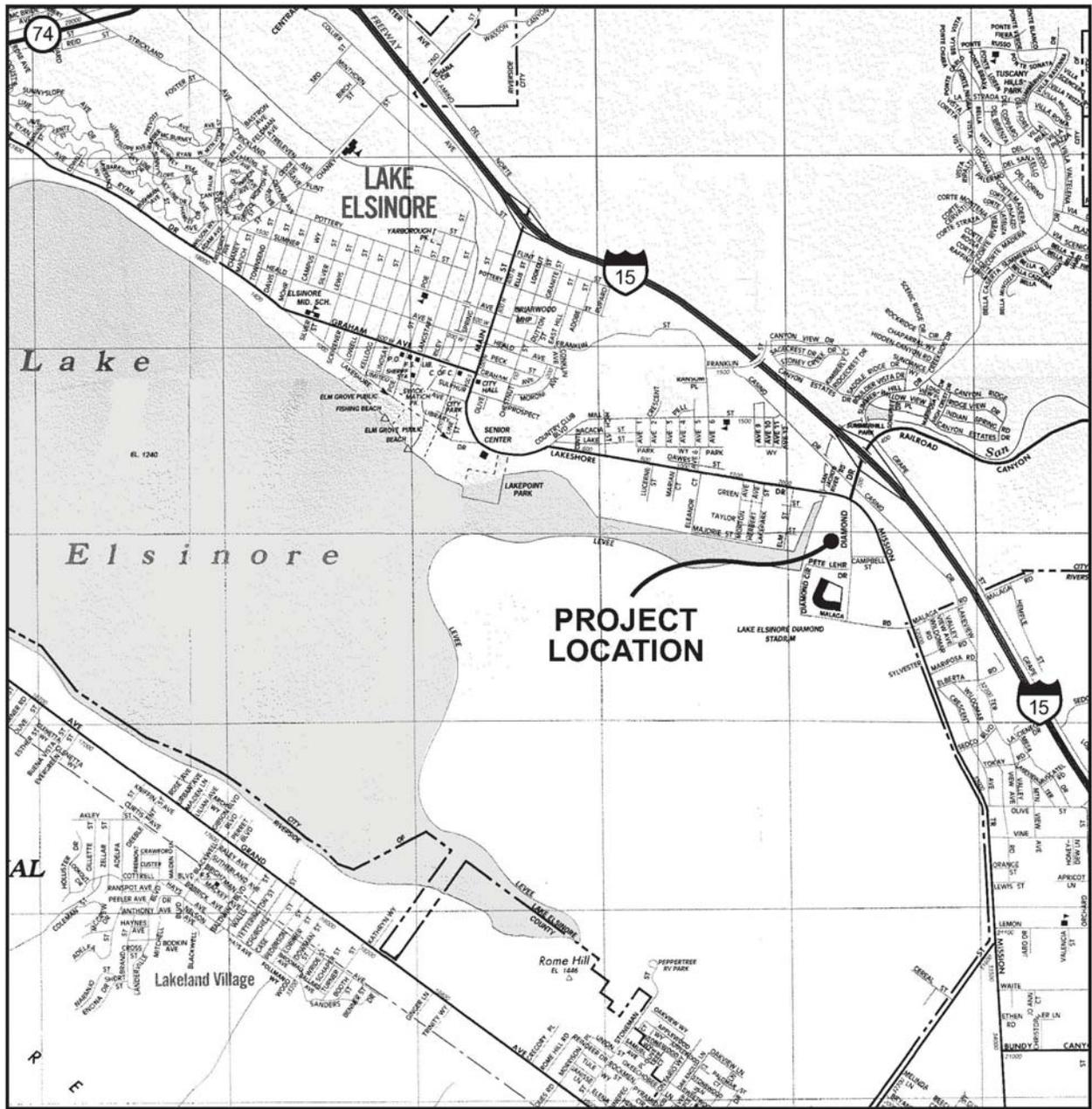
Name: Carole K. Donahoe, Planning Consultant
 Date: March 23, 2009
 Telephone: (951) 674-3124, ext. 287

Source: RGP Planning & Development Services 2009 | G:\010570\KELS\101221_DIAMOND\graphics\docs\FIG1_regional.ai | Last Updated: 02-06-09



Regional Location
FIGURE 1

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Project Site Vicinity
FIGURE 2

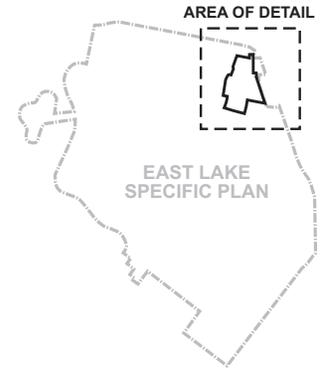
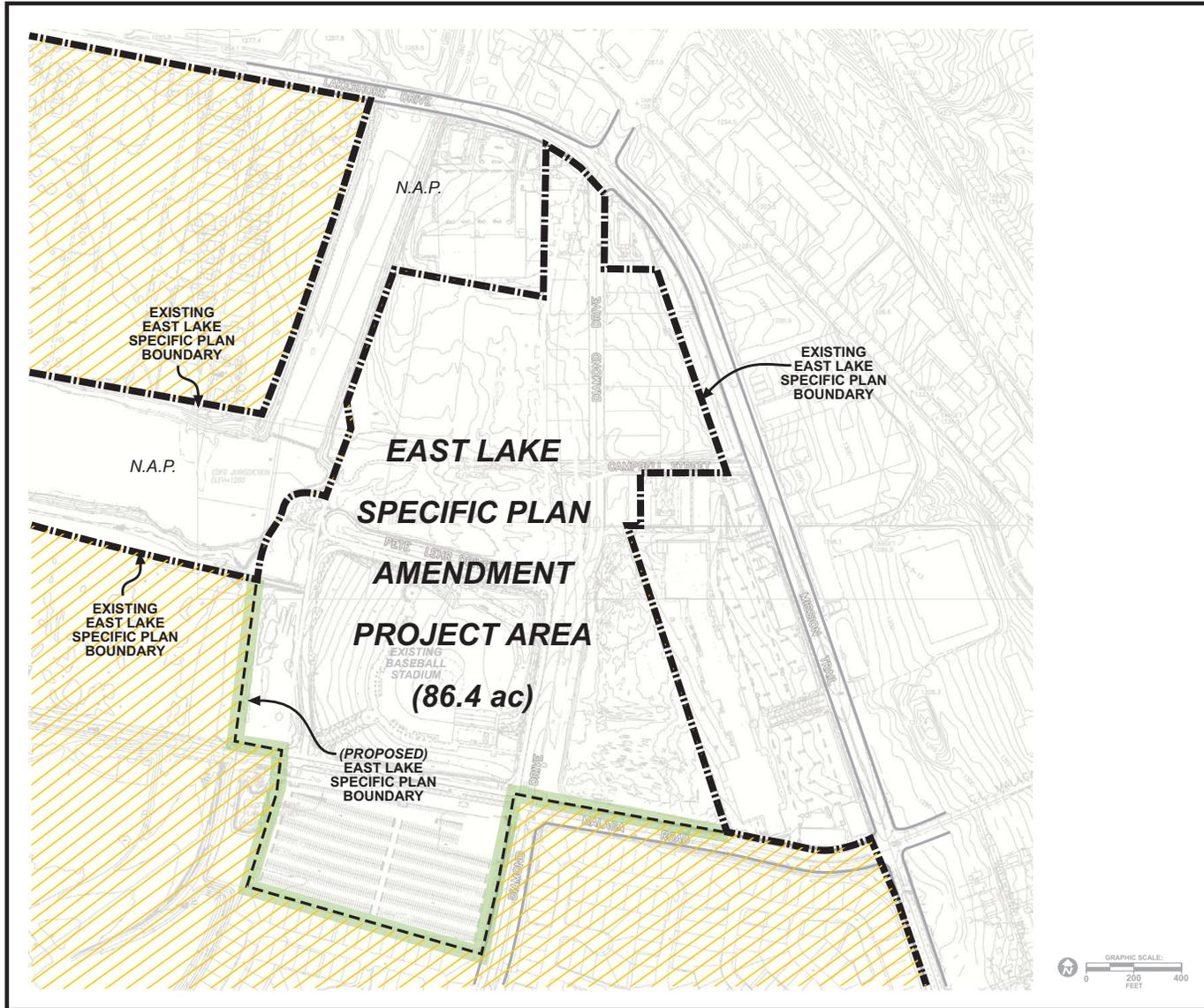


EXISTING PROJECT SITE & SURROUNDING LAND USES

- 1 = Proposed Diamond Specific Plan Boundary
- 2 = The Diamond Specific Plan - Existing (Lake Elsinore Valley Center) Retail / Commercial
- 3 = Existing Baseball Stadium Complex
- 4 = The Diamond Specific Plan - Existing Vacant Lot
- 5 = Existing Stadium Surface Parking Lot
- 6 = Adjacent Existing Commercial Business
- 7 = Adjacent Existing Commercial Business
- 8 = Existing East Lake Specific Plan
- 9 = Adjacent Commercial / Retail Business
- 10 = Adjacent Existing Floodway
- 11 = Lake Elsinore



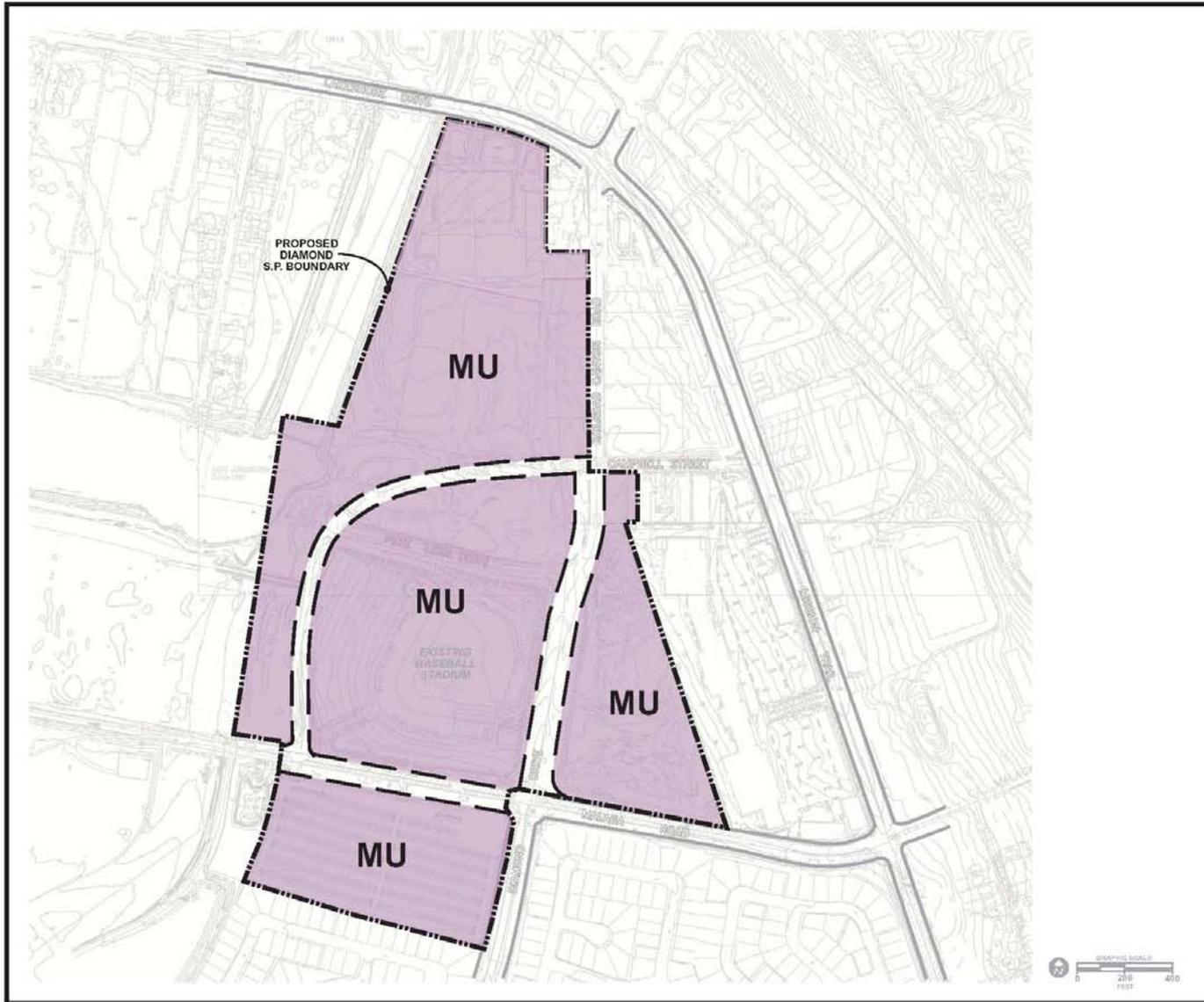
The Diamond Site Aerial
FIGURE 3



LEGEND

-  = Existing East Lake Specific Plan
-  = Proposed Boundary Adjustment

ELSP Amendment 9 Project Area Boundary
FIGURE 4



LAND USE

MU = Mixed-use	81.6
Roads	<u>5.6</u>
	87.2 ac.

The Diamond Land Use Plan
FIGURE 5