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

Date: June 2, 2025
Project Title: Sonoma County Airport Area Specific Plan
Lead Agency: County of Sonoma
Comment Period: June 2, 2025, through July 2, 2025
Scoping Meeting: June 12, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 pm PST at Sonoma County Office of Education, 5340 Skylane Blvd, Santa Rosa. **In person or Zoom.**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/88142615967?pwd=9qr9pd3iqsC9K6q5DvhgYBYemWeFoO.1>

Webinar ID: 881 4261 5967

Passcode: 019018

Project Location: The Plan Area is bordered by the Town of Windsor to the north, Highway 101 to the east, Mark West Creek to the south, and North Laughlin Road and Sonoma County Airport to the west (refer to Figures 1 and 2).

Lead Agency Contact: Claudette Diaz, Project Planner
County of Sonoma
2550 Ventura Avenue
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PRMD-AirportSpecificPlan@sonoma-county.org

Environmental Impact Report: The County of Sonoma is preparing the Sonoma County Airport Area Specific Plan, known as the proposed Project (Project). The County has determined that the Project requires the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR or EIR) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines). The County will be the lead agency for the Project, pursuant to CEQA. The County has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) in



accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15802(a) and 15375. This NOP describes the proposed Project that will be analyzed in the EIR and identifies areas of probable environmental effects of the Project.

Agencies 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, we need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The Project description, location, and topics of probable environmental effects that will be analyzed in the Program EIR are contained in the pages that follow. Since the County has determined that a Program EIR is required for the Project, pursuant to Section 15060(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, preparation of an Initial Study is not required and, therefore, one has not been prepared. Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after the receipt of this notice.

Written Comments: Please submit written comments within 30 days of the date of this notice to any of the below by 5:00 p.m. on **July 2, 2025**:

- Email: PRMD-AirportSpecificPlan@sonoma-county.org
- Regular Mail: Permit Sonoma, Attn: Claudette Diaz, 2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95403

Public Scoping Meeting: Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21083.9(a)(2), scoping meetings are required for projects that may have statewide, regional, or area-wide environmental impacts. The County has determined that this Project meets this threshold. The County will hold a scoping meeting to provide an opportunity for agency staff and interested members of the public to submit comments, either written or verbal, on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. Written comments can also be mailed or emailed to the above-mentioned addresses.

The scoping meeting details are listed above.

The scoping presentation will be available to view after **June 12, 2025**, at:

<https://permitsonoma.org/regulationsandlongrangeplans/longrangeplans/airportareaspacificplanupdate>

Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report for the County of Sonoma Airport Area Specific Plan

Date of Distribution: June 2, 2025

Introduction: The purpose of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental impacts of a proposed project that an agency (in this case, the County of Sonoma) may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to: (1) provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; (2) examine methods (e.g., project-specific mitigations, uniformly applied development regulations) for avoiding or reducing significant impacts; and (3) consider alternatives to the proposed project.

In accordance with CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project, its potential significant environmental impacts, and mitigations required to avoid or reduce those significant impacts;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for the project;
- Alternatives to the proposed project; and
- Other environmental consequences of the project, including:
 - growth-inducing effects,
 - significant unavoidable impacts,
 - irreversible environmental changes,
 - cumulative impacts, and
 - effects found not to be significant.

Project Location: The approximately 810-acre Plan Area is located in the geographic center of Sonoma County. The Plan Area is bordered by the Town of Windsor to the north, Highway 101 to the east, Mark West Creek to the south, and North Laughlin Road and Sonoma County Airport to the west. The existing Northwestern Pacific Railroad and Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) corridor runs through the Plan Area in a north-south direction. The Plan Area is comprised of undeveloped parcels, industrial uses, retail uses, and residential uses.

Project Background: The proposed Airport Area Specific Plan Update (Specific Plan) would update the existing 1984 Sonoma County Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan, as amended. In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, Permit Sonoma previously circulated a Specific Plan EIR NOP to local, state, and federal agencies between May 7, 2019 and June 6, 2019. Subsequently, Permit Sonoma was awarded a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Grant to support completion of the Specific Plan. A PDA is a designated area near public transit that is planned for new homes, jobs, and community amenities. PDAs are located in areas with existing transit infrastructure, such as the Sonoma County Airport SMART Station. The MTC PDA grant requires that the County comply with MTC's Transit Oriented Community (TOC) Policy, Resolution No. 4530. The TOC Policy supports the region's transit investments by ensuring communities surrounding transit stations have access to transportation, housing, jobs, and services. It also emphasizes that these resources are accessible to individuals of all ages, abilities, income levels, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. The Specific Plan update must adhere to the TOC Policy requirements. As a

result, the Specific Plan's buildout assumptions have been updated in order to comply with the TOC Policy requirements and this new NOP is being circulated.

Proposed Project: The Specific Plan will include a comprehensive set of goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures including an infrastructure funding plan. The updates to the Specific Plan are limited to the parcels within a half-mile radius of the SMART station. The Specific Plan maintains the industrial character of the Plan area by continuing to plan for and allow light and heavy industrial uses throughout most of the Specific Plan area, particularly west of the SMART rail corridor. Development near the Sonoma County Airport SMART Station seeks to achieve a compact pattern, with a tighter circulation pattern east of the railroad tracks. New streets and multi-use pathways are limited to necessary segments that support the land use pattern. The Specific Plan no longer includes the Pruitt Drive Extension or Brickway Boulevard Extension. However, the Specific Plan proposes a new traffic circle at the intersection of Airport Boulevard and Laughlin Road. The extension of Aviation Boulevard, which connects Brickway Boulevard and Skylane Boulevard, has been completed and is now included as part of the Specific Plan's transportation network.

The proposed Urban Residential Land Use designation would allow for up to 1,308 residential units on approximately 38 acres

within the Specific Plan through a combination of rezoning and application of the Workforce Housing (WH) Combining District, Affordable Housing (AH) Combining District, and a new Transit Oriented Community (TOC) Combining District.

The Specific Plan will adjust the Urban Service Area (USA) boundary to follow the southern parcel boundaries along Mark West Creek, incorporating the two parcels to the USA and sewer and water districts.

A summary of the Specific Plan buildout is summarized in **Table 1** below. The proposed land uses are depicted in **Figure 3**.

Table 1: Specific Plan Development Assumptions

Land Use	Potential New Development
Non-Residential Development	
Industrial and Warehousing	834,000 square feet
Retail	30,000 square feet
Office	390,000 square feet
Residential Development	
Residential	1,308 units
Totals	1,462,000 s.f. non-residential; 1,308 dwelling units

Potential Environmental Effect Areas: The EIR will describe the reasonably foreseeable and potentially significant adverse effects of the proposed project (both direct and indirect). 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 impacts after establishing the appropriate baseline for the analysis. The EIR will evaluate each of the environmental issue topics required by CEQA, as follows:

1. *Aesthetics*

The EIR will describe the existing visual setting of the Specific Plan area and the visual changes that are anticipated to occur as a result of the Specific Plan. Aesthetic impacts will be evaluated pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21099. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

2. *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*

The EIR will describe the Specific Plan's impact (if any) on existing farmland, forest land, and timberland. According to Sonoma County Important Farmland data, the majority of the Specific Plan Area is designated Urban and Built-Up Land. However, within the Plan Area there are areas designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, and Other Land. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

3. *Air Quality*

The EIR will describe the regional air quality conditions in the San Francisco Bay Area and evaluate the air quality impacts from implementation of the Specific Plan in conformance with the criteria identified by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District). Given the timing and nature of individual construction projects are unknown, construction air quality impacts and health risk impacts would be addressed qualitatively. Operational emissions of criteria air pollutants from buildout of the Plan would be computed using the CalEEMod model supplemented with the most recently available on-road mobile emission factors and compared to relevant Air District thresholds. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

4. *Biological Resources*

The biological resources analysis will describe existing biological conditions and any sensitive biological resources, such as potentially regulated habitats (e.g., wetlands) and special-status species, which may occur in the Plan Area. The EIR will also describe the impacts of the project on biological resources, including resource agency permitting requirements, and mitigation measures that would be necessary to reduce significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

5. *Cultural Resources*

The EIR will discuss potential impacts to cultural resources that could result from the Specific Plan. The potential for implementation of the Specific Plan to impact historic and archaeological resources

will be identified and where impacts to cultural resources may not be avoided, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented.

6. Energy

The EIR will examine the potential for the Specific Plan to result in excessive or inefficient use of energy and discuss the energy conservation measures to be included in future development implementing the Plan. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

7. Geology and Soils

The existing geologic and soil conditions in the Plan Area will be described in the EIR based on the County's General Plan. The EIR will describe the impacts to persons or property likely to result from implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and the existing geologic (including seismic) conditions in the area. Mitigation measures for significant impacts will be identified, as appropriate.

8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The EIR will evaluate the project's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in conformance with the methodology of the Air District and the County's Climate Resilience Comprehensive Action Plan. GHG emissions for the project will be evaluated relative to Assembly Bill (AB32) and Senate Bill 32 standards. Project design measures to reduce energy use and GHG emissions will be discussed. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The EIR will evaluate the potential for hazardous materials contamination within and near the Plan Area. The EIR will identify past or present activities that may have, or could, cause significant contamination. Mitigation measures for significant impacts will be identified, as appropriate.

10. Hydrology and Water Quality

The project area has FEMA mapped floodplains and floodways for Mark West Creek and Redwood Creek. The EIR will describe potential impacts to Mark West Creek, Redwood Creek, and the surrounding properties from any fill or roadway alignments on the existing floodplains/floodways as mapped on the currently effective Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) for Sonoma County. The EIR will identify program mitigation measures and requirements to meet FEMA and local floodplain requirements.

The EIR will also discuss water quality impacts of redevelopment activities within the Plan Area including planned development and infrastructure. The information will include existing and future (with project) areas of pervious and impervious surfaces and proposed stormwater control measures consistent with Low Impact Development requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit. The EIR will discuss the preliminary stormwater management plan for the Plan Area. Mitigation measures for significant impacts will be identified, as appropriate.

11. Land Use and Planning

The proposed project will update the existing Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan with modified land use designations, policies, and guidelines for future development in the Plan Area. The Specific Plan boundary does not include the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport. Development and operations at the airport are governed separately by the Airport Master Plan. The EIR will analyze the proposed changes resulting from implementation of the Specific Plan and the plans conformance to existing County goals, policies, and objectives for the Plan Area. The EIR will also describe land use conflicts that may result from implementation of the Specific Plan and identify mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

12. Noise and Vibration

The predominant sources of noise within and around the Plan Area are vehicular traffic along US Highway 101, Airport Boulevard and other local roadways, intermittent railroad trains including SMART operations, and aircraft associated with Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport. Future noise levels affecting the planning area will be calculated based on future traffic volumes along adjacent roadways, SMART/railroad projections contained in the SMART EIR, and aircraft noise projections contained in the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport Master Plan Implementation Project EIR. Noise generated by the construction activities and project-generated traffic will be calculated at nearby sensitive land uses. The noise and land use compatibility of sensitive uses affected by the plan will be assessed based on adjustments to existing noise data and future projections. The EIR will identify areas of potential noise conflicts with existing or proposed sensitive uses in the vicinity and identify noise impacts resulting from implementation of the Specific Plan project on a temporary and/or permanent basis. Noise impacts will be assessed with respect to applicable County policies and appropriate CEQA significance criteria. Mitigation measures will be identified to reduce noise levels to acceptable levels. Mitigation will be presented to also reduce potentially significant noise impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the project and establish design standards to mitigate noise impacts resulting from future projects in the Plan Area.

13. Mineral Resources

The EIR will describe whether the Specific Plan would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

14. Population and Housing

The EIR will evaluate the Specific Plan's effects on population and housing using the same assumptions as the County's General Plan for population growth and identify appropriate mitigation measures.

15. Public Services

The EIR will describe the available public services (e.g., fire and police protection, schools, libraries, and parks) in the Specific Plan area and the potential for the Specific Plan to require the expansion or construction of additional facilities. The EIR discussion will focus on whether the expansion or construction of additional facilities would result in significant environmental impacts. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

16. Recreation

The EIR will describe the available recreational facilities in the Specific Plan area and the potential for the Plan to substantially accelerate the deterioration of those facilities or require the expansion or construction of additional facilities, and whether the expansion or new construction of additional facilities would result in significant environmental impacts.

17. Transportation

The EIR will evaluate possible transportation impacts from implementation of the Specific plan using the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metric. The EIR will discuss the Plan's consistency with programs, plans, ordinances, and policies addressing the circulation system (including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities). The study will include an analysis of weekday AM and PM peak hour traffic conditions relative to local plans and policies addressing traffic congestion. The project's impact on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit services and the potential for the project to reduce vehicles miles travelled (VMT) will also be discussed in the EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

18. Tribal Cultural Resources

The EIR will identify whether tribal cultural resources have been identified in the area, including through the consultation process per Assembly Bill 52. The EIR will identify feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may lessen or avoid impacts to tribal cultural resources.

19. Utilities and Service Systems

The EIR will describe the existing sanitary sewer, storm drain, water, and solid waste services for the Specific Plan area. The EIR will discuss the adequacy of the existing utilities and service systems to accommodate the demand from the proposed Plan and identify necessary improvements. Pursuant to SB 610, a Water Supply Assessment for the Specific Plan will be completed by the local water

retailer serving the area and included in the EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as necessary.

20. Wildfire

The Plan Area is in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and is not located in a designated Fire Hazard Severity Zone as defined by CalFire. The EIR will discuss whether the Specific Plan would impact or exacerbate wildfire risk and/or impair emergency response. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

21. Alternatives

The EIR will examine alternatives to the Specific Plan including a “No Project” alternative and one or more alternative development scenarios depending on the impacts identified. Alternatives discussed will be chosen based on their ability to reduce or avoid one or more of the identified significant impacts of the proposed project while achieving most of the identified objectives of the project.

22. Significant Unavoidable Impacts

The EIR will identify those significant impacts that cannot be avoided, if the project is implemented as proposed.

23. Cumulative Impacts

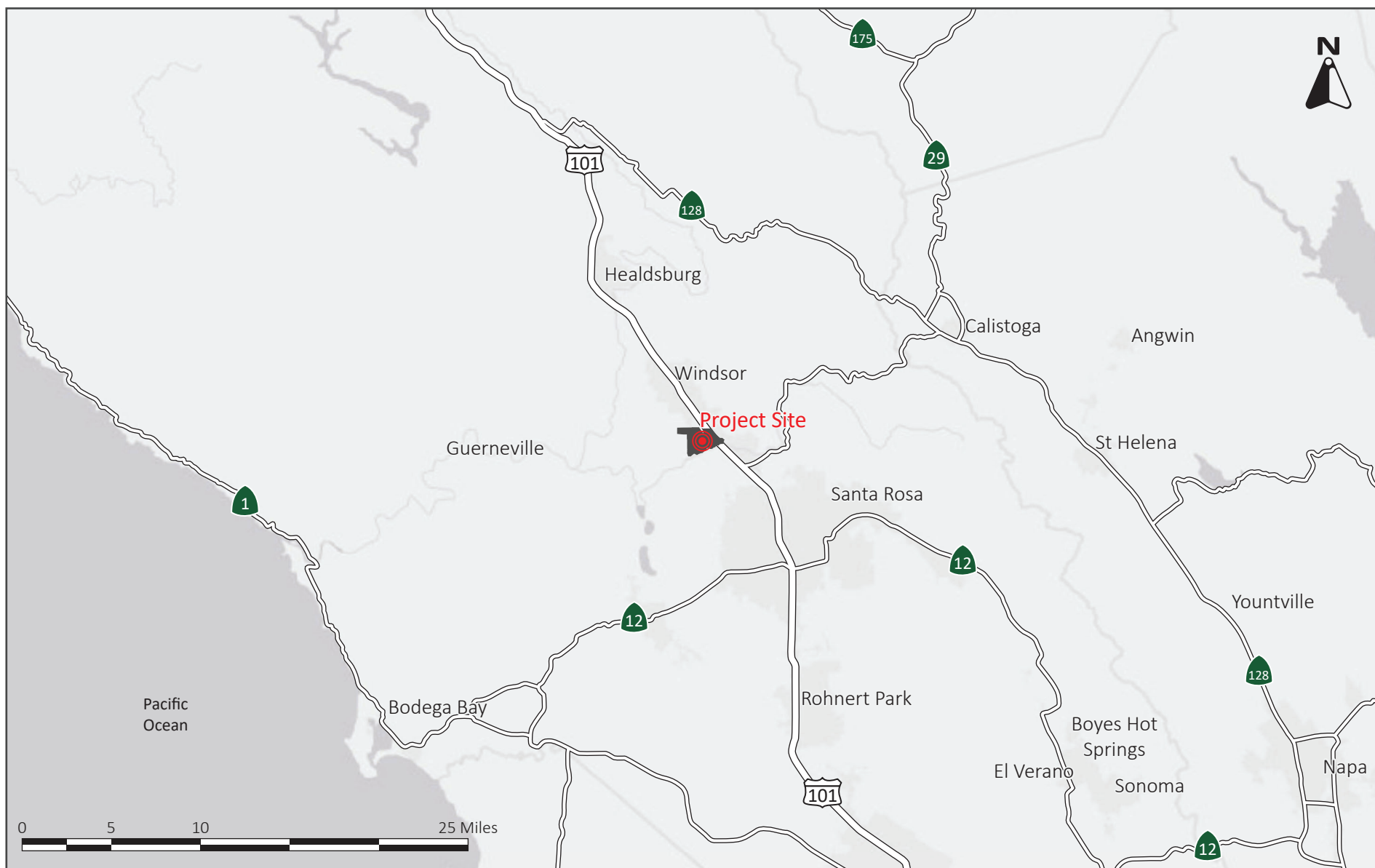
The EIR will include an analysis of potentially significant cumulative impacts of the project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the development area. The following approved (but not yet constructed or occupied) and pending projects will be evaluated as part of the cumulative analysis:

- Airport Village Senior Housing Project (3843 Brickway Boulevard; 1,464 residential units)
- Hyatt Hotel Project (3750 North Laughlin Road; 165 hotel rooms)
- Hilton Hotel Project (251 Aviation Boulevard; 101 hotel rooms)

24. Other Required Sections

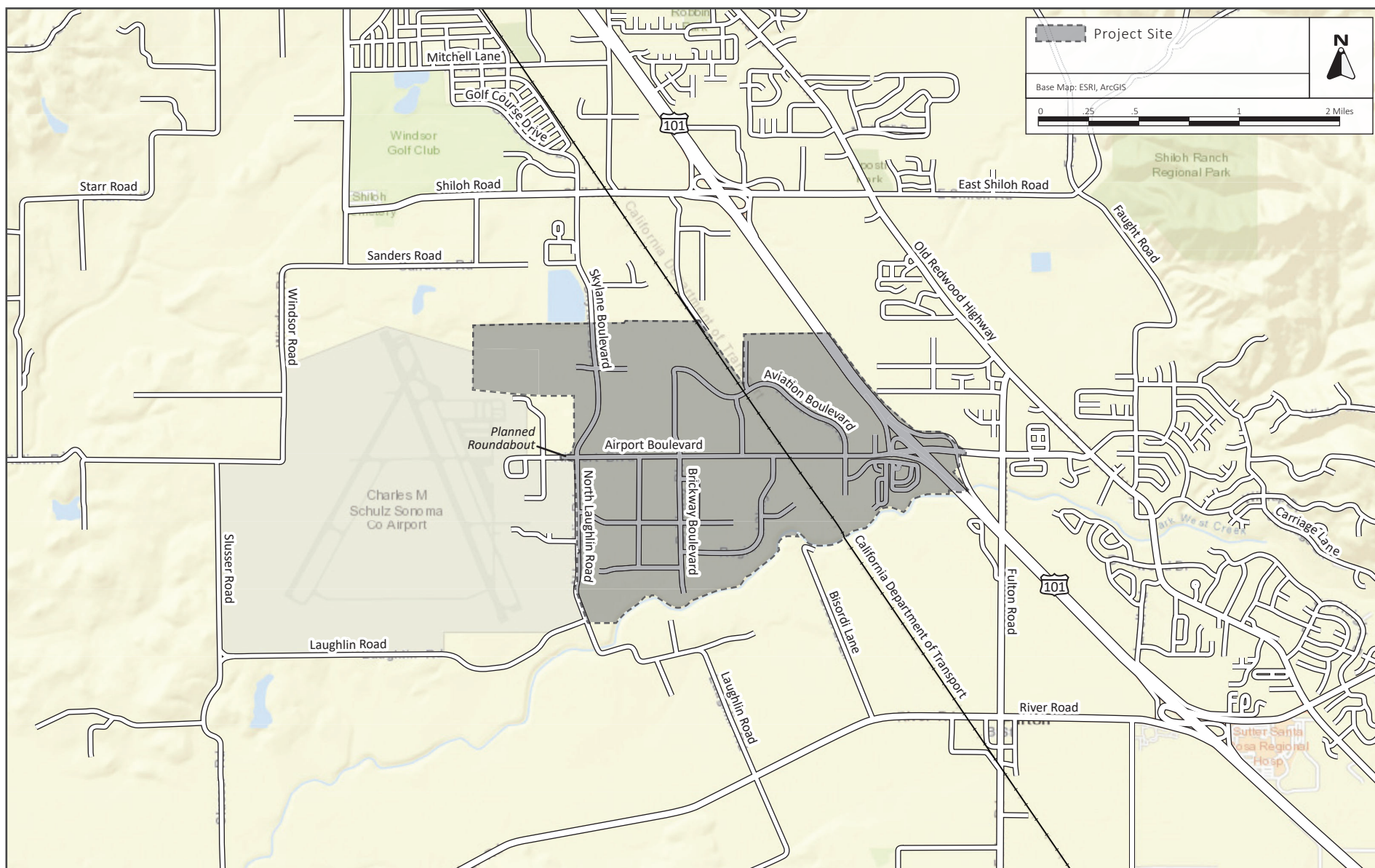
In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also include the following sections: 1) consistency with local and regional plans and policies, 2) growth inducing impacts, 3) significant irreversible environmental changes, 4) references and organizations/persons consulted, and 5) EIR authors.

Please contact Claudette Diaz at PRMD-AirportSpecificPlan@sonoma-county.org or (707) 565-7387 with any questions regarding this notice or the scoping meeting.



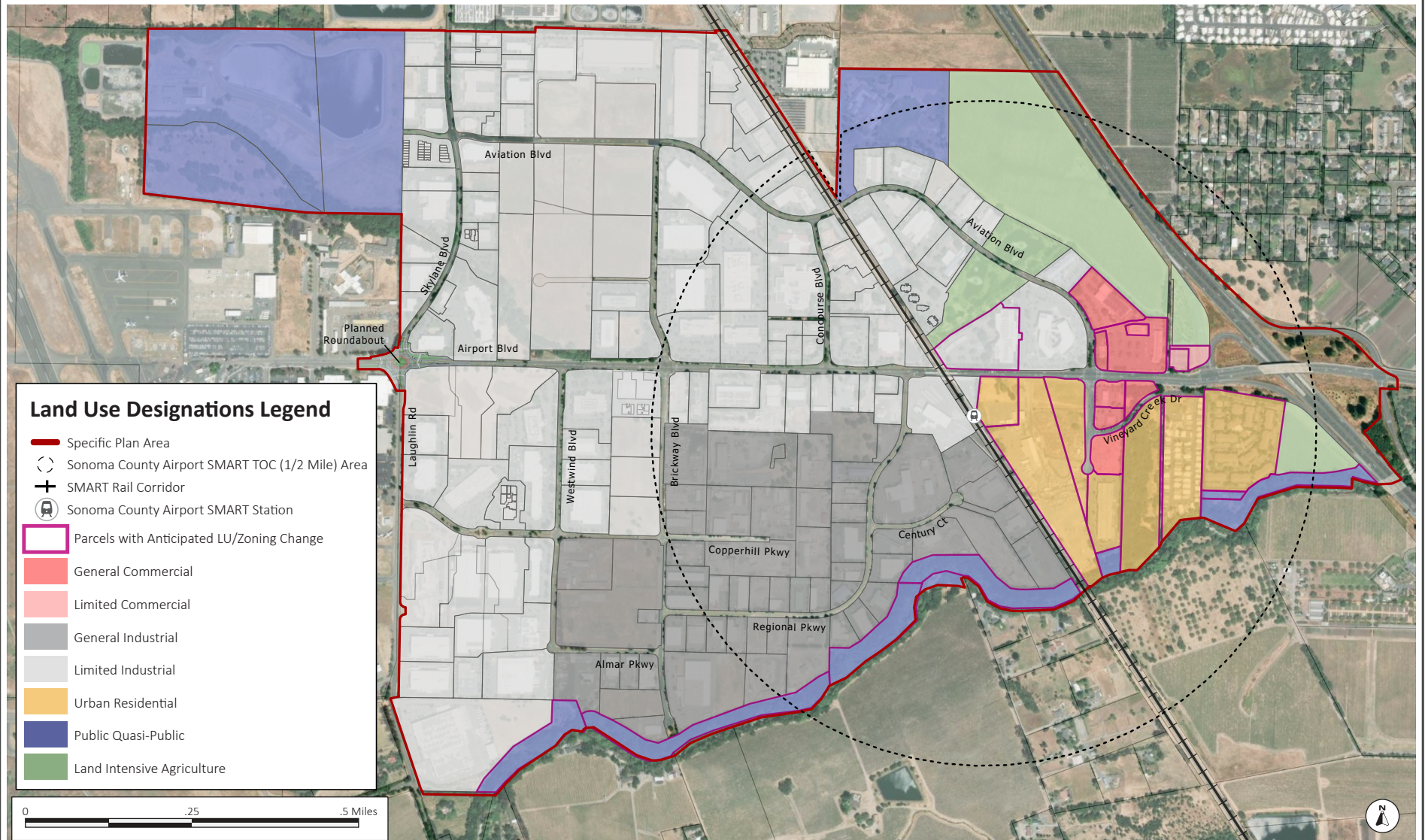
REGIONAL MAP

FIGURE 1



VICINITY MAP

FIGURE 2



AIRPORT AREA SPECIFIC PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

FIGURE 3