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NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

DATE: April 19, 2013

TO: Responsible Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: City of Elk Grove
Contact: Christopher Jordan, AICP
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758

SUBJECT: Environmental Impact Report for the Southeast Policy Area Strategic Plan

In discharging its duties under Section 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Elk Grove (as lead agency, hereinafter City) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), consistent with Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines (Division 6 of Chapter 3 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, hereinafter the CEQA Guidelines), for the Southeast Policy Area Strategic Plan Project (the "Project," described later in this document). In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Elk Grove has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide to the Office of Planning and Research, responsible and trustee agencies, and other interested parties with sufficient information describing the Project and its potential environmental effects.

The determination to prepare an Environmental Impact Report was made by the City of Elk Grove following preliminary review of the Project. As an EIR is clearly needed for the Project, no initial study has been prepared for the Project, and is not required, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a). Probable environmental effects of the Project are described in the attached Project Summary.

As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, the Notice of Preparation shall be circulated for a 30-day review period. **The comment period runs from Friday April 19, 2013, to Monday May 20, 2013.** The City of Elk Grove welcomes public input during the review period. In the event no response or a well justified request for additional time is received by any responsible agency by the end of the review period, the lead agency may presume that the responsible agency has no response (CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b)(2)).

Comments may be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

City of Elk Grove
Planning Department
c/o Christopher Jordan, AICP
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758

A scoping meeting for the Project will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Thursday May 9, 2013, at the City of Elk Grove City Council Chambers, located at 8400 Laguna Palms Way in Elk Grove.

A. PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

The approximately 1,200-acre proposed Project includes the entirety of the City of Elk Grove's Southeast Policy Area (SEPA). The SEPA is located to the west of Highway 99, east of Big Horn Boulevard and Bruceville Road, south of Bilby Road and Poppy Ridge Road, and north of Kammerer Road (**Figure 1**). This area is bordered to the north and west by the approved Laguna Ridge Specific Plan (LRSP) Area. The southern border of the City is adjacent to the southern boundary of the SEPA. To the east are the approved Sterling Meadows Project and the future Elk Grove Promenade and Lent Ranch Marketplace.

The Project area has historically been used for agricultural purposes and is primarily undeveloped with some scattered residences, ornamental landscaping, and outbuildings. A drainage channel, flowing in an east to west direction, bisects the Project area. Existing zoning provides for Agricultural uses with 20- and 80-acre minimum parcel sizes (AG-20/AG-80).

In 2006, an application was filed with the City for a specific plan for the area. This application was ultimately withdrawn by the Project applicant.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Project includes the preparation and adoption of the following, which are collectively referred to as the Strategic Plan:

- A Community Plan policy document that provides policy guidance for future land use, circulation, parks and recreation, infrastructure, and community character;
- Community design guidelines, streetscape plan, public space elements, and architectural development standards to guide the look and feel of future development;
- Backbone roadway sizing and intersection studies to identify future right-of-way needs for major roadways in the community, as well as connectivity of multimodal transportation routes, including access for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Preliminary drainage plan, identifying design requirements, facility needs, and alignment of the backbone drainage system, including alignment of Shed C and location of detention facilities; and
- Preliminary water and sewer plans, identifying backbone infrastructure needed to serve the planned development.

C. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, ILLUSTRATIVE LAND PLAN, AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This section describes the overall objectives for the Project, including the Guiding Principles, Illustrative Land Plan, and calculated development potential.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In March 2013, the City Council identified a series of Guiding Principles for the SEPA. The Guiding Principles identify the overall objectives of the Project and guide the formulation of the land use

plan and the policies and standards contained within the Community Plan and accompanying documents.

Vision Statement

The primary objective for the Southeast Policy Area is to plan for a range of job opportunities that are supported by a balanced mix of residential densities and locally oriented retail uses. The Southeast Policy Area will be a regional destination for both employment activities and entertainment, such as sports or performing arts. The Southeast Policy Area will integrate with surrounding land uses through the incorporation of parks and open space, trails, and landscape buffers. A complete transportation network made up of roadways, sidewalks, trails, and transit (including light rail) will allow for the safe and effective movement of people and goods within the Plan Area and connect them with other parts of the City and region. Development will be of quality design and materials that contribute to the sense of place and identity for the area.

Guiding Principles

The following principles provide an overarching development framework for the SEPA.

I. URBAN DESIGN/PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REALM DESIGN

- Create a strong sense of identity, community, neighborhood, and development at a human scale.
- Require high quality urban design elements throughout the Plan Area by incorporating locally and environmentally sensitive landscaping, appropriate site amenities (sidewalk furniture, lighting, bike racks, etc.), and complementary architectural design.
- Locate land uses in a manner that nearby uses are complementary to one another, thereby reducing the potential for interface conflicts.

II. LAND USE

- Create a plan that provides a mix of land uses, including residential and employment opportunities supported by commercial and neighborhood-oriented uses and services such as parks, pedestrian and bike paths/trails, and recreational opportunities.
- Provide flexibility in the intensity and density of land uses to respond to changes in economic, market, and social factors, while maintaining land use compatibility.
- Provide space for a destination that can be both a local and a regional draw (e.g., large sports complex and supportive uses).
- **Mixed Use**
 - Encourage mixed-use development (e.g., vertical mixed-use buildings with retail uses on the ground floor and offices or residential on upper floors) within a community core that includes a future light rail station. Centrally locate the core in the Plan Area and make it easily accessible by a range of uses and services.

▪ **Residential Uses**

- Provide a diverse range of housing densities and product types, from low-density estate housing to higher-density multi-family residential opportunities.
- Locate multi-family residential uses near transit facilities and, where feasible, near commercial and employment uses.

▪ **Employment Opportunities/Jobs Development**

- Designate sufficient employment-oriented land uses to create job opportunities and improve the jobs-to-housing balance within the City.

▪ **Public Services and Community-Oriented Uses**

- Locate educational facilities in the most effective locations for successful attendance, usefulness to the community, and utilization of future public transit facilities.
- Provide landscaped paseos and/or other off-street pedestrian amenities, increasing walkability and providing pedestrian connectivity throughout the Plan Area as well through adjacent properties. Provide linkages in an east–west and north–south direction.
- Create a plan that makes active and passive park facilities available at a level comparable to adjacent projects.
- Identify the main drainage channel within the Plan Area as a dual-use facility, incorporating both drainage functions and recreation opportunities as possible. Recreation opportunities could include active trail amenities along the channel, enhanced landscaping, and other features as feasible.

III. **CIRCULATION**

- Organize land uses and provide linkages to allow for a significant percentage of the Plan Area's students, residents, and employees to be located within close proximity to, and with easy access to, future transit facilities.
- Provide sufficient intensity of residential and employment opportunities to attract an appropriate level of public transit services.
- Provide landscaped parkways and pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the Plan Area to provide linkages between land uses internally and to surrounding areas.
- Provide a circulation system that adequately supports the anticipated level of traffic in the Plan Area.

IV. **ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY**

- Design the Plan Area in a manner that comprehensively addresses drainage and flood control for both on- and off-site properties.

- Create a “self-mitigating” plan that, to the extent feasible, incorporates environmental mitigation measures into Project design.
- Require the efficient use of energy and resources.

V. CONTEXTUAL COMPATIBILITY

- Develop a plan that recognizes the right of existing uses, including residences, to continue and to minimize impacts upon these uses.
- Create a plan that is compatible with adjacent properties.
- Accommodate connectivity of roadways, pedestrian and bicycle access, and recreation facilities across Plan Area boundaries.
- Create a plan that does not cannibalize on existing and planned commercial corridors and centers within the community.

ILLUSTRATIVE LAND PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

As part of the Guiding Principles, the City Council identified an Illustrative Land Use Plan for the SEPA, which is conceptual rather than a formal land plan, focusing on land uses and major roadways. It does not include neighborhood parks, trails, final widths of drainage channels, detention basin locations, and other key features of a “final” land use plan.

Table 1 summarizes the land uses and approximate acreages proposed by the Project. **Figure 2** provides the proposed land use diagram.

**TABLE 1
PROPOSED SOUTHEAST POLICY AREA LAND USES**

Land Use	Acreage (Approximate)
Estate Residential	65
Low Density Residential	230
Medium Density Residential	135
High Density Residential	65
Village Center Mixed Use	35
Commercial	15
Office	290
Light Industrial/Flex Space	110
School	30
Parks	20
Drainage Channel/Open Space	95
Major Right-of-Way and Drainage	105
TOTAL	1,200
<i>Sports Complex Overlay</i>	<i>125</i>

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Tables 2 and 3 summarize the development potential of the Illustrative Land Use Plan. These development assumptions will be used in the EIR to determine the potential impact of the Project.

**TABLE 2
DWELLING UNIT POTENTIAL**

Land Use	Total Acres	Assumed Density (du/gross acres)	Dwelling Units
Estate Residential	65	4.0	260
Low Density Residential	230	5.5	1,265
Medium Density Residential	135	12.1	1,635
High Density Residential	65	24.9	1,620
Mixed Use	35	2.11	70
TOTAL	530		4,850

**TABLE 3
NONRESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Land Use	Acres	Floor Area Ratio	Employees per Acre	Total Building Square Footage	Total Employees
Mixed Use ¹	35	0.4	51.79	609,840	1,810
Commercial	15	0.29	27.18	189,490	410
Office	290	0.43	62.75	5,431,930	18,200
Industrial/Flex Space	110	0.30	37.34	1,437,480	4,110
TOTAL				7,668,740	24,530²

Notes:

1. Inclusive of dwelling space.

2. School employment is estimated at 190, bringing the overall total to 25,660.

The sports complex is an overlay designation. For purposes of this table, development under the office designation is shown, but the EIR will consider the potential for development for either office or sports complex.

D. REQUIRED APPROVALS AND PERMITS

Potential permits and approvals required by the City of Elk Grove include:

- Certification of an Environmental Impact Report and adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan;
- Adoption of the Community Plan;
- Approval of rezoning the SEPA to Special Planning Area District; and
- Approval of a community facilities district and/or other financing mechanisms.

The EIR will be used to support subsequent actions, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Approval of large-lot subdivision maps and/or vesting large-lot subdivision maps dividing the property into parcels consistent with the SEPA land use plan;

- Amendment to the City's infrastructure master plans and fee programs;
- Approval of small-lot subdivision maps, design reviews, and other required planning approvals; and
- Approval of building and grading permits, improvement plans, and final maps.

Approvals required by other agencies may include:

- Sacramento County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) approval to annex the Plan Area into the territory of the Sacramento Area Sewer District;
- Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers;
- Biological Opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for Project impacts on special-status species;
- Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- Section 401 certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB);
- Construction Activity Stormwater permit from the RWQCB;
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the RWQCB;
- Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) clearance;
- Elk Grove Unified School District and California Department of Education approval of school site acquisition and construction plans.

E. TYPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

The SEPA EIR will be prepared as a "Program EIR," pursuant to section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines. A Program EIR examines the environmental impacts of an overall area that may contain a series of subsequent projects. This type of EIR focuses on the changes in the environment that would result from implementation of the overall Project, including development of land uses identified in the Project, as well as infrastructure (on site and off site) required to serve the Project. The SEPA EIR will serve as the environmental review document for subsequent activities in the program. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c), the City will review any subsequent activities to determine if the activity is within the scope of the project covered by the program EIR or whether an additional environmental document must be prepared. If the City finds pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 that no new effects could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required, the City can approve the subsequent activity as being within the scope of the project covered in the Program EIR, and no new environmental document would be required.

F. PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The EIR will evaluate whether the proposed Project would potentially result in one or more significant environmental effects. The following issues will be addressed in the EIR:

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Public Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation

ISSUES SCOPED OUT FROM ANALYSIS IN THE EIR

Some of the environmental issues would result in less than significant impacts and will not be discussed in the EIR for the reasons discussed below.

Seiche, Tsunami, and Mudflow

Based on the Project's location (inland, away from any water bodies) and topography (relatively flat), there would be no impacts related to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. This impact will not be discussed in the EIR.

Mineral Resources

The Project site is not used for mineral extraction, nor is it designated as an important mineral recovery site. Therefore, there would not be a significant impact on mineral resources, and this issue will not be discussed in the EIR.

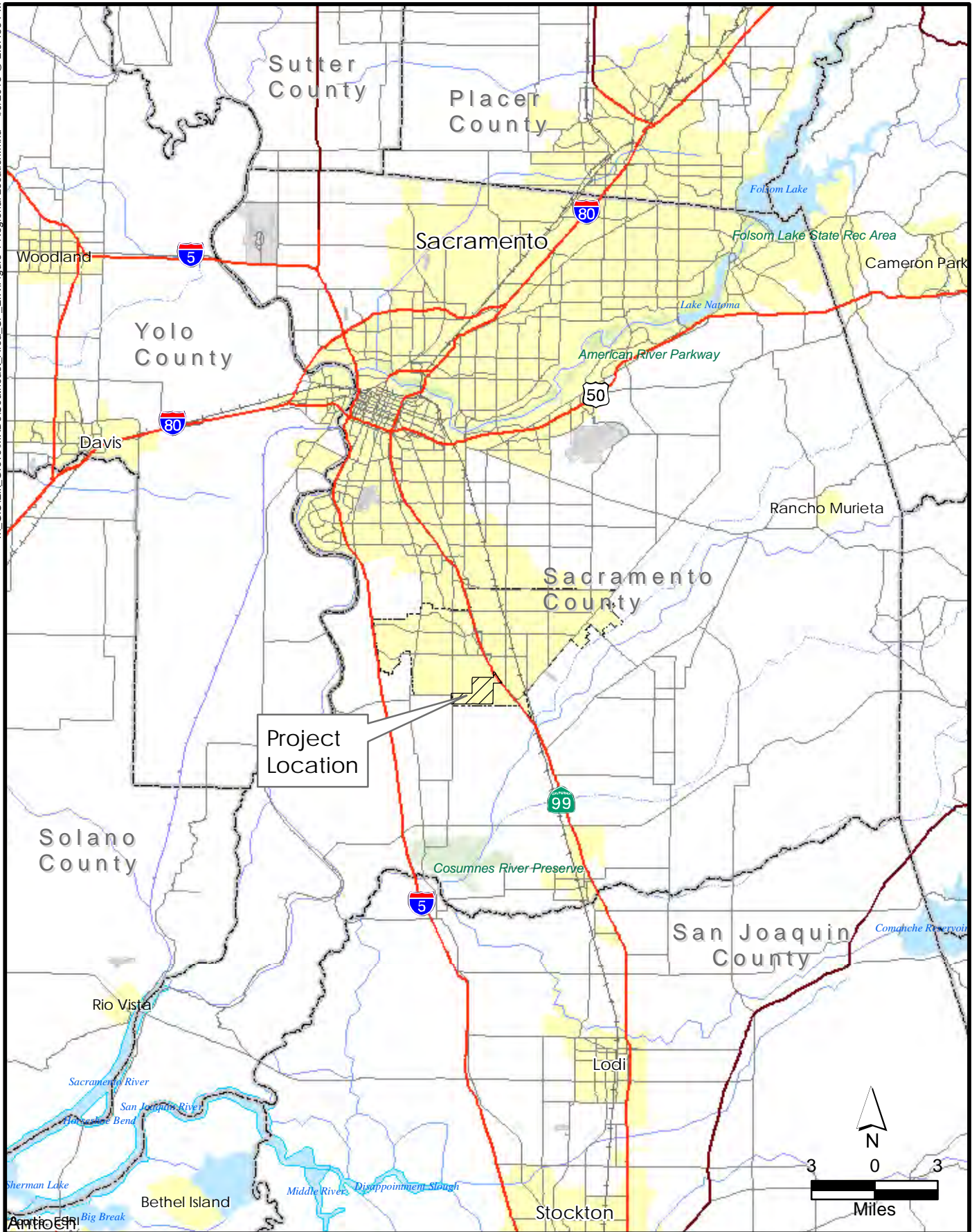
Airports, Airstrips, and Air Traffic Patterns

The airport nearest to the Project site is Sacramento Executive Airport, approximately 10 miles to the north. Because the Project site is not located in the vicinity of any airports, there would be no impacts associated with conflicts with airports or changes in air traffic patterns. This issue will not be discussed in the EIR.

Use of Septic Systems

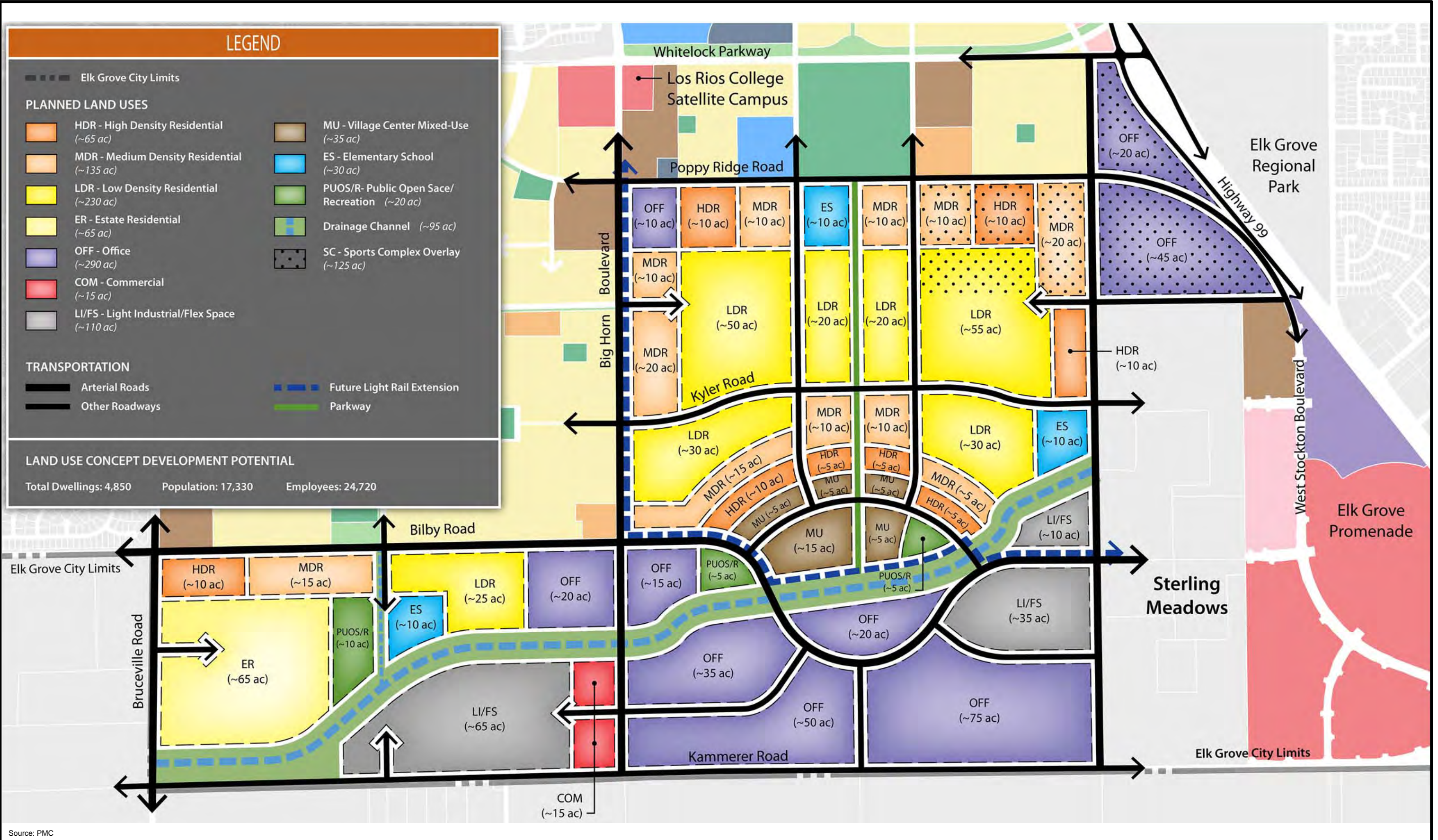
The Sacramento Area Sewer District is the agency responsible for providing sewer service within Elk Grove. A wastewater master plan is being developed for the Project. Because septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems are not proposed, there would be no impact related to septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Impacts related to septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems will not be discussed in the EIR.

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City of Elk Grove
Development Services

Figure 1
Regional Location Map



Source: PMC



City of Elk Grove
Development Services

Figure 2
Illustrative Land Use Plan

