
4.0 LAND USE

This section describes the existing and proposed land uses in the Project area, characterizes current and proposed surrounding land uses, and describes the land use designations according to the City of Elk Grove General Plan (General Plan), as well as zoning. The Project area was included in the General Plan as its own special policy area, the Southeast Policy Area.

Section 15125(d) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines states, "The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans." As such, this section discusses potential inconsistencies between the proposed Project and the City's General Plan and Zoning Code as well as SACOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS).

CEQA does not treat project consequences relating solely to land use, socioeconomic, or population, employment, or housing issues as direct physical impacts to the environment. An EIR may provide information regarding land use, planning, and socioeconomic effects, but CEQA does not recognize these types of project consequences as typical impacts on the physical environment. The following assessment focuses on changes in land use, use compatibility, and General Plan consistency, to the extent that potential General Plan conflicts may lead to physical impacts on the environment. Physical effects on the environment that could result from implementation of the Project are addressed in the appropriate technical sections of this Draft EIR (see Sections 5.1 through 5.23). Specific to land use, a discussion of agricultural resources is included in Section 5.2 of this Draft EIR.

4.1 EXISTING SETTING

CITY OF ELK GROVE

Elk Grove is characterized by a range of existing land uses, including residential developments, commercial/retail uses, office uses, and industrial uses, as well as agricultural and public/private recreation uses. Predominant land uses in the City include residential, agricultural, and institutional uses such as schools, churches, and other public entities.

Prior to its incorporation in July 2001, Elk Grove was part of unincorporated Sacramento County. Historically the area now encompassed by the City was primarily agriculture and ranchettes, with the exception of the downtown area. Over the last 20 years, the area began converting from agricultural uses to predominantly suburban development. Following the City's incorporation, the suburban conversion has continued as evidenced by new subdivisions, office uses, and shopping centers. Currently, the majority of new development is concentrated on the west side of State Route (SR) 99. Areas in the eastern portion of the City near Grant Line Road are still characterized as rural residential. Lands adjacent to the City limits to the east and to the south within Sacramento County are designated for agriculture.

PROJECT AREA

The Project area is approximately 1,200 acres located in the southern portion of the City and includes the entirety of the City's Southeast Policy Area (SEPA), as designated in the General Plan. The Project area is located to the west of SR 99, east of Big Horn Boulevard and Bruceville Road, south of Bilby Road and Poppy Ridge Road, and north of Kammerer Road

The Project area is generally bounded by Poppy Ridge Road, Kammerer Road, a future extension of Big Horn Boulevard, and another future major roadway to the east (Lots Parkway), with a "panhandle" section that extends to the west along Kammerer Road. The panhandle section of the Project area is bounded by Kammerer Road to the south, Bruceville Road to the

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west, and Bilby Road to the north. Bilby Road is currently only partially paved north of the Project area. In addition to the panhandle portion of the Project area to the southwest, the northeast triangular-shaped section of the Project area extends beyond Poppy Ridge Road to the east to SR 99 and north of the future extension of Kyler Road, which is currently only partially constructed.

EXISTING LAND USES

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-west direction, bisects the Project area. The Project area comprises 38 parcels with various landowners, and existing zoning provides for agricultural uses with 20- and 80-acre minimum parcel sizes (AG-20/AG-80).

Surrounding Areas

North of the Project area is primarily agricultural, rural residential, and vacant land, which is planned for urban uses as part of the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan (LRSP). Approximately one-quarter mile north of Poppy Ridge Road is an uncompleted residential subdivision and Elizabeth Pinkerton Middle School. The area north of the panhandle portion of the Project area is also within the LRSP area and is characterized by vacant and agricultural land, with the exception of a large apartment complex on the northeast corner of the intersection of Bilby Road and Bruceville Road.

Existing single-family residences associated with the East Franklin Specific Plan are located west of Bruceville Road north of Bilby Road. The area west of Bruceville Road south of Bilby Road is agricultural land on large parcels, with some scattered rural residences. The historic town of Freeport is approximately 2 miles to the west of the panhandle portion of the Project area.

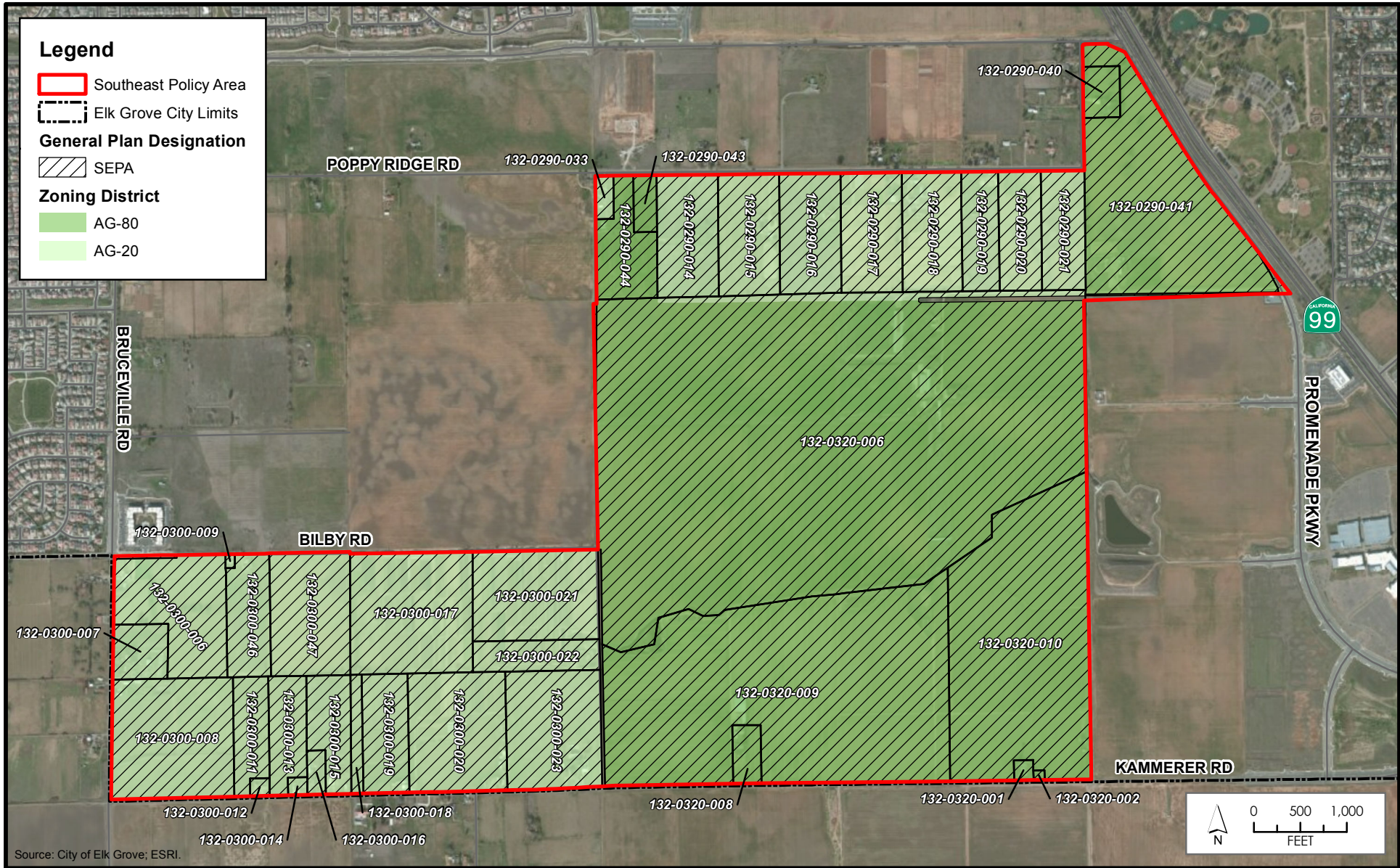
South of the Project area is more agricultural land with scattered rural residences. Dairies are operated along Rau Road, south of Kammerer Road. The area south of Kammerer Road is outside of the City and its Sphere of Influence (SOI).

The Sterling Meadows Project is located east of the Project area and Kyler Road and Bilby Road run through that area. Lent Ranch, which includes the Promenade, is east of Sterling Meadows. SR 99 is east of those projects and Elk Grove Regional Park just beyond the highway.

CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND ZONING

The General Plan designates the entire Project area as a special land use policy area, referred to as the Southeast Policy Area. Because it is a policy area, the General Plan allows for detailed planning in the future and, as such, defers to the Southeast Policy Area Community Plan in establishing land uses for the Project area. The Southeast Policy Area Community Plan is being prepared concurrently with this EIR and is analyzed here as the Project. Proposed land use designations as laid out in the Community Plan are described later under the heading "Proposed Land Use Designations and Zoning."

The entire project area is zoned for agricultural uses with 20- and 80-acre minimum parcel sizes (AG-20 and AG-80, respectively). Ten parcels, including those within the triangular-shaped portion in the northeast corner of the Project area, and large parcels in the center of the Project area, are zoned AG-80, while most of the smaller parcels just south of Poppy Ridge Road and all of the parcels located within the western panhandle portion of the Project area are zoned AG-20 (see **Figure 4.0-1**). Some of the parcels zoned AG-80 are smaller than 80 acres.



Source: City of Elk Grove; ESRI.

Figure 4.0-1
General Plan and Zoning Districts

PLANNED AND APPROVED DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROJECT VICINITY

While much of the land located directly adjacent to the Project area is undeveloped, many of the surrounding areas are planned and approved for future development. This includes the Elk Grove Promenade, as mentioned above, approximately 0.5 mile east of the Project area (and 0.1 mile southeast of the triangular-shaped portion of the Project area) adjacent to SR 99.

The Sterling Meadows project, a residential development, is located east of the Project area, in the area between the eastern boundary of the Project area and Lent Ranch. No construction has occurred on the Sterling Meadows project. Portions of the site are fallow or being used for agriculture. Some roadways that would feed into the Project area have been partially constructed, including the eastern portions of Bilby Road and Kyler Road. Those roads have not been fully constructed through the Sterling Meadows site.

Laguna Ridge Specific Plan

North of the Project area east of Bruceville Road is the approved Laguna Ridge Specific Plan (LRSP) area. The LRSP encompasses approximately 1,900 acres in the area generally bounded by Bruceville Road, Elk Grove Boulevard, SR 99, and the Project area to the south. The LRSP is set to be developed with up to 7,767 residential units, commercial, office, and civic uses, parks, paseos and open space, and schools. While construction has begun in some areas of the LRSP, none of the areas directly adjacent to the Project area have been developed, with the exception of the apartment complex located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Bruceville Road and Bilby Road; and Poppy Keyes North, a residential project at the northeast corner of Poppy Ridge Road and Bruceville Road. Existing development within the LRSP is located primarily north of Whitelock Parkway, approximately 0.25 mile north of the Project area.

East Franklin Specific Plan

The East Franklin Specific Plan (EFSP) area is located directly northwest of the panhandle portion of the Project area, northwest of the intersection of Bruceville Road and Bilby Road. The EFSP was planned for the development of up to 4,300 residential units with some commercial uses, parks, and a school on approximately 1,440 acres in the area generally bounded by Bruceville Road, Bilby Road, Franklin Boulevard and Willard Road, and Bilby Road. Most of the EFSP has been developed, although some properties scattered throughout the EFSP area have not yet been developed.

4.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

LOCAL

City of Elk Grove General Plan

The City of Elk Grove General Plan serves as the overall guiding policy document for the City and identifies specific policies regarding land use. While this section provides information on the applicable policies and the Project's consistency with those policies, the final authority for interpretation of these policy statements and determination of the Project's General Plan consistency rests with the Elk Grove City Council.

The General Plan includes six policy areas that "have been designated to reflect existing and pending major approvals, or to reflect the need for more detailed land uses planning at a future date" (City of Elk Grove 2003). Each of the policy areas has land use policies specific to that

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area that are intended to direct future growth. Specifically, Policy LU-32 sets out general criteria for the SEPA. The text of General Plan Policy LU-32 is as follows:

“LU-32

- Development in the Southeast Policy Area shall not occur, and no land use entitlements shall be granted until a master plan has been prepared and approved by the City.
- The master plan shall, at a minimum, include the following specific components:
 - Detailed designation of land uses;
 - A master plan for key backbone infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, drainage, roads);
 - Architectural standards, development regulations, or other planning that describes the form and function of new development; and
 - Other components as directed by the City Council as being necessary for the proper and comprehensive planning of the policy area.
- The City Council may, at its discretion, waive the requirement of preparation of a master plan of the Southeast Policy Area prior to the approval of a land use entitlement when, at the determination of the City Council after a recommendation by the Planning Commission, the project meets the following criteria:
 - The project is a minimum of 75 acres in size; and
 - The project is located in an area of the Southeast Policy Area that will allow for the orderly and strategic extension of utilities and infrastructure to serve the development; and
 - The project:
 - Will improve the jobs-housing balance of the City and/or stimulate jobs creation and retention; and/or
 - Is of city-wide significance, providing a needed or desired amenity, feature, or other aspect, as determined by the City; and
 - Approval of the project will not inhibit future master planning efforts.”

Sacramento Area Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) adopted the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) in 2012. The MTP/SCS is a long-range regional transportation and land use plan based on SACOG’s Blueprint project, a smart land use vision strategy development for the Sacramento region. The SCS portion of the plan is required by Senate Bill 375, which requires that smart land use planning be built into regional transportation plans with the intention of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The current MTP/SCS plans for regional transportation and land use investments through 2035.

The following guiding principles are from the MTP/SCS (SACOG 2012):

Smart Land Use: Design a transportation system to support good growth patterns, including increased housing and transportation options, focusing more growth inward and improving the economic viability of rural areas.

Environmental Quality and Sustainability: Minimize direct and indirect transportation impacts on the environment for cleaner air and natural resource protection.

Financial Stewardship: Manage resources for a transportation system that delivers cost-effective results and is feasible to construct and maintain.

Economic Vitality: Efficiently connect people to jobs and get goods to market.

Access and Mobility: Improve opportunities for businesses and citizens to easily access goods, jobs, services and housing.

Equity and Choice: Provide real, viable travel choices for all people throughout our diverse region.

The MTP/SCS includes policies and strategies suggested for jurisdictions to support the above-mentioned policies. The Project supports the following SACOG policies and strategies:

3. Policy: SACOG will encourage local jurisdictions in developing community activity centers well-suited for high quality transit service and complete streets.

3.4. Strategy: Support efforts by transit agencies and local governments to site and design transit centers and stations close to economic centers and neighborhoods and to expand park-and-ride facilities at a few key stations.

3.5. Strategy: Encourage local agencies to develop an interconnected system of streets, bikeways, and walkways that support a more compact development form; avoid building new circulation barriers; accommodate safe travel for all users; and provide connections across creeks, freeways and high-speed/high volume arterials and through existing gated communities, walls and cul-de-sacs to access schools, activity centers and transit stops.

3.6. Strategy: Encourage development patterns that provide safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stops and trunk commuter transit lines.

4. Policy: SACOG encourages every local jurisdiction's efforts to facilitate development of housing in all price ranges, to meet the housing needs of the local workforce and population, including low-income residents, and forestall pressure for long external trips to work and essential services.

4.2. Strategy: Encourage adequate supply of housing at a variety of price ranges in the region, which will help to meet local demand, prevent the export of housing to adjacent regions, and, consistent with federal and state statutory goals, promote integrated and balanced living patterns that help provide access and opportunity for all residents and reduce the concentration of poverty.

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6. Policy: SACOG encourages local governments to direct greenfield developments to areas immediately adjacent to the existing urban edge through data-supported information, incentives and pursuit of regulatory reform for cities and counties.

8. Policy: Support and invest in strategies to reduce vehicle emissions that can be shown as cost effective to help achieve and maintain clean air and better public health.

8.1. Strategy: Continue the region's previous commitment to Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs as a strategy for education and promotion of alternative travel modes for all types of trips toward reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by 10 percent.

The MTP/SCS is not mandatory and cannot regulate local land use decisions for the local jurisdictions within the Sacramento region; rather, it relies on voluntary land use decisions by cities and counties.

4.3 LAND USE EVALUATION

METHODOLOGY

In the following analysis, the proposed Project is evaluated for compatibility with the existing and planned land uses in the Project vicinity and for consistency with adopted City plans and policies. Environmental impacts resulting from the project are discussed in the respective environmental sections in Section 5.0. Land use impacts are considered significant if the proposed Project would conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. As mentioned above, the City Council is ultimately responsible for interpreting the General Plan and would determine whether the Project is inconsistent with any adopted land use goals or policies. This section differs from other discussions in that only plan consistencies and land use compatibility are addressed, as opposed to environmental impacts and mitigation measures. This discussion complies with Section 15125(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, which requires an EIR to discuss inconsistencies with general plans and regional plans as part of the environmental setting.

CONSISTENCY

General Plan

As mentioned above, the Project area is one of the City's six land use policy areas, which provide for more detailed planning in the future. All of the land use policy areas, with the exception of the SEPA, have been at least partially developed. The proposed Project, including adoption of the Southeast Policy Area Community Plan and Southeast Policy Area SPA, implement General Plan Policy LU-32, which provides General Plan-level policy guidance for how the SEPA should be planned. Policy LU-32 requires that the SEPA be planned through the completion of a comprehensive master plan or similar comprehensive plan for the entire SEPA. The Project is implementing this General Plan requirement, so the Project is consistent with the General Plan. All physical environmental impacts that could occur as a result of developing the Project area consistent with the Southeast Policy Area Community Plan are addressed in the impact sections in Section 5.0 of this Draft EIR.

Zoning Code

The proposed Project includes the rezoning of the 38 parcels located within the Project area from AG-20 or AG-80 to Special Planning Area District. The intent of the Project is to convert land currently zoned for and in agricultural production to provide a mix of land uses, including residential and job-generating land uses, to accommodate the future growth of the City. The Southeast Policy Area SPA is the guidance document for specific development requirements, so all future development within the Project area would need to be consistent with that document. The proposed project would have its own set of design standards and guidelines, which set forth the allowable (permitted) uses and would be the Zoning for the Project area. The intent of the Special Planning Area District is to allow the Southeast Policy Area SPA to be adopted with approval of the proposed Project, to direct development standards within the Project area, consistent with the goals of the General Plan. Elk Grove Municipal Code Section 23.16.100 describes special planning areas and acknowledges the potential for inconsistencies between SPAs and the Zoning Code. Because the potential for inconsistencies is allowed under the Municipal Code, this would not be considered contrary to the code.

SACOG MTP/SCS

As described in Sections 2.0, Project Description, and 3.0, Demographics, the proposed Project would provide job-generating land uses that would help to balance the City's jobs-to-housing ratio, develop a range of housing types to accommodate varying lifestyles and a range of affordability levels, and provide for a future light rail extension and centrally located transit stop. These concepts are consistent with the smart growth principles encouraged by the MTP/SCS. By implementing these concepts, the Project would help to improve the City's jobs-to-housing ratio and commute times, reduce traffic in Elk Grove and in the region, and reduce the physical environmental impacts associated with long commutes and traffic, such as air quality, noise, and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, smart growth principles and efficient land use enable rural areas in the region to remain in agricultural production and can help to keep environmentally sensitive areas from being developed. This is the general intent of the MTP/SCS, and the City maintains consistency with these concepts.

COMPATIBILITY

Existing and Planned Adjacent Land Uses

The Project area is surrounded to the west, north, and east by planned and approved urban development. With the exception of the area northwest of the intersection of Bruceville Road and Bilby Road and an apartment complex located northeast of that intersection, none of the planned developments have been constructed. Portions of the specific plan areas, not immediately adjacent to the Project area, have been developed. Lands within the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan to the north and west of the Project area and in the Sterling Meadows development to the east are currently vacant. Some infrastructure has been developed in the Sterling Meadows development, some development has occurred in the Laguna Ridge Special Plan area north of Whitelock Parkway, and there is currently a project being constructed at the northeast corner of Poppy Ridge Road and Bruceville Road.

The adjacent specific plan areas have been developed and planned for primarily residential uses. The Sterling Meadows development is also residential, and a large commercial center, the Elk Grove Promenade, has been started just east of that. While the proposed Project intends to incorporate more variety in land uses than the surrounding planned developments, it has been designed to be complementary to the approved developments adjacent to the Project area,

4.0 LAND USE

as well as to incorporate more modern urban planning practices than have been used in the City previously. In addition, one of the primary objectives of the Project is to provide jobs so that existing and future Elk Grove residents have more opportunity to work locally, which ultimately would result in fewer environmental impacts associated with traffic, air quality, noise, and climate change. The residential and urban uses proposed in the Project area would be compatible with the surrounding development and would also support the more residential portions of the City by providing places to work and shop locally.

The area southwest of the intersection of Bruceville Road and Bilby Road and the land south of the Project area are currently agricultural lands and are not planned for future development at this time; they are anticipated to remain in agricultural production for the foreseeable future. The City is committed to preserving agriculture within and outside of the existing City limits, pursuant to General Plan Policy LU-17. Urban development located adjacent to ongoing agricultural activities may be considered to be incompatible when the physical effects (i.e., odors, dust, light, smoke) associated with the operation of one land use adversely affect an adjacent land use. Agricultural activities generate dust, smoke, and odors that could be considered a nuisance by future residents of the Project area. Similarly, agricultural activities can be affected by complaints by neighboring residential development and the presence of more people and traffic on roads like Kammerer Road. Agricultural activities would generally only affect properties on the urban edge. The City of Elk Grove Municipal Code Chapter 14.05, Agricultural Activities, would reduce the potential for conflicts. Chapter 14.05 would ensure that agricultural operations are operated in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards. It also requires that notification be provided to residents of property located near properties designated for agricultural use and includes notification and mediation procedures for cases in which agricultural activities are not being conducted in a reasonable manner, or when the operator of an agricultural operation is not using currently acceptable methods in the conduct of the farm.

Due to the City's commitment to preserving agricultural uses, the Project has been designed to minimize potential conflicts between the developed land uses within the Project area and the neighboring agricultural uses to the south and west of the Project area. For example, the Project places primarily nonresidential land uses adjacent to ongoing agricultural activities. Estate Residential uses adjacent to Bruceville Road would be the only planned residential uses adjacent to agricultural uses. Because of the larger lots for homes that would be found in this area, there would be fewer residents and the larger lots would be located farther from agricultural uses. And any residential uses that may be affected by agricultural activities would be notified in advance pursuant to Municipal Code Chapter 14.05. The potential for negative impacts associated with conflicts with estate residential uses would be less likely than if more dense residential was developed there. With residential uses largely separated from agricultural activities, the potential for conflicts and negative effects, such as dust, light, smoke, and odors, would be minimized. With nonresidential uses providing a buffer between residential and agricultural uses, the potential for complaints would be reduced.

This analysis only addresses the Project's compatibility with adjacent agricultural land uses. For an analysis of the physical environmental impacts associated with conversion of agricultural land within the Project area and the potential to adversely affect adjacent agricultural operations, please refer to Section 5.2 of this Draft EIR.

Sports Complex Overlay

In addition to the proposed land use plan, the proposed Project includes an approximately 120-acre Sports Complex Overlay designation that has not been designated for a particular location, which would give the City the option to develop a regional sports complex with tournament-type sports fields or a stadium, on-site parking, associated lighting, and support facilities for facility maintenance, concessions, and players. Currently, there are no specific development proposals for such a complex and no planned location within the Project area for the overlay, so a project-specific analysis of land use compatibilities is not possible at this time. However, the overlay will be required to be consistent with the Meridian Community Plan and Meridian SPA. In addition, any future facility will require project-specific environmental analysis once a development proposal is received and specific project details are available.

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REFERENCES

City of Elk Grove. 2003. *City of Elk Grove General Plan*. Adopted November 2003; amended January 2005.

———. 2012. *Elk Grove Zoning Code*.

SACOG (Sacramento Area Council of Governments). 2012. *Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy 2035*.