
3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the Draft Sutter County General Plan (proposed General Plan), which is the project evaluated in this Program level EIR. The “proposed project” is the adoption and implementation of the General Plan. This chapter provides an overview of the project’s regional location and setting, project background, project objectives, overview of the general plan process, a brief description of the Draft General Plan, and required project approvals.

PROJECT LOCATION

Sutter County is located in the central portion of the Sacramento Valley, with its southern boundary located approximately 10 miles north of the city of Sacramento. Sutter County’s jurisdictional boundaries are generally defined by Yolo and Colusa counties to the west, with the Sacramento River and Butte Sink forming the western boundary; Butte County to the north; Yuba and Placer counties to the east with the Feather and Bear rivers forming a portion of the eastern boundary; and Sacramento County to the south, with the southern boundary south of Riego Road. Major roadways that bisect the county include State Routes 70 and 99 that traverse the county in a north-south direction and are the primary corridors connecting Sutter County to the region. State Route 20 is the primary east-west connection through the county between Highway 99 and Interstate 5. The County is comprised of 607 square miles of land or 378,875 acres. The boundaries of the proposed General Plan or “policy area” encompass the entire county, as shown on Figure 3-1.

Project Setting

The topography of Sutter County is primarily flat, with the exception being the Sutter Buttes rising out of the valley floor in the northern portion of the county. Similar to Mediterranean climates, Sutter County’s climate is generally characterized by hot, dry summers, with relatively moderate, wet winters. The County is generally divided into two geographic areas – the Sutter Buttes and the valley area. The Sutter Buttes, often referred to as the world’s smallest mountain range, are a symbolic focal point of the county. The valley area covers the majority of Sutter County and is characterized by flat topography and open row or field crop type agricultural uses. The valley floor has an extremely low population density, primarily as a result of large scale farming operations.

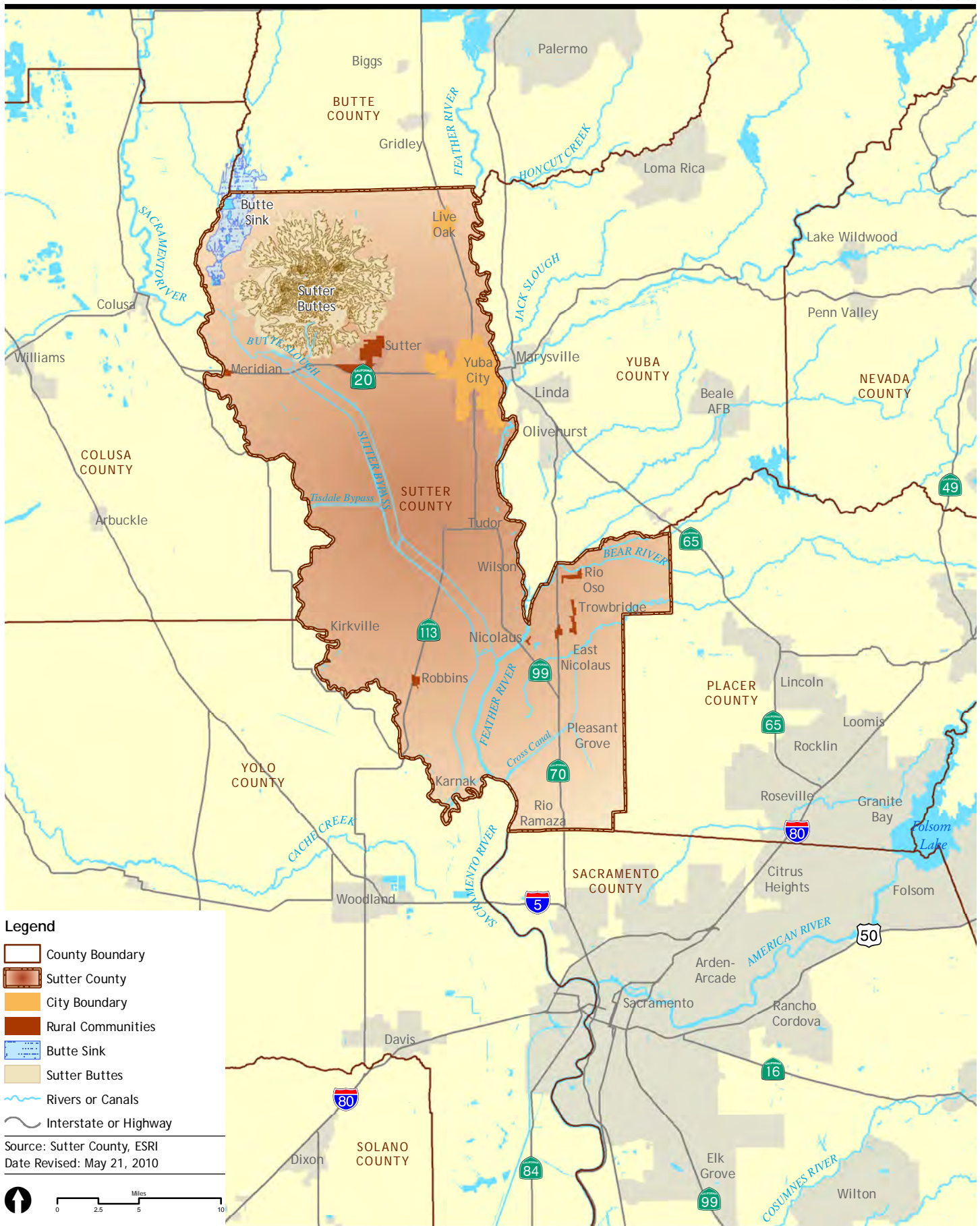
Within the county there are approximately 32,000 acres of uplands in the Sutter Buttes. The uplands consist of land that ranges in elevation from approximately 100 feet above mean sea level to the highest elevation at 2,117 feet. The majority of uplands are covered by oak woodlands and valley grasslands consisting of trees with scattered brush and grassland areas. The periphery of the upland area contains open grasslands generally used for agricultural purposes.

The Bear River converges with the Feather River in the southern portion of the county near the community of Nicolaus, and from there, the Feather River flows south through the south-central portion of the county, where it converges with the Sacramento River at the county's boundary with Yolo County. Within the county there are also several major flood control canals including the Sutter Bypass running through the center of the county from north to south; the Tisdale Bypass which runs east-west and connects the Sutter Bypass to the Sacramento River near the center of the county; the Cross Canal and Natomas East Main Drainage Canal in the south; and the Wadsworth Canal, east of the community of Sutter. The Sutter Bypass is a major manmade flood control area that acts as an overflow collector of flood flows in the Sacramento River after passing through the Butte Slough and the Butte Sink. The Sutter Bypass and the drainage canals generally run south from the Butte Sink, in the northwest corner of the county and adjacent to the western edge of the Sutter Buttes, through the center of the county until they meet with the Sacramento River west of its convergence with the Feather River.

The County is home to two incorporated cities; Yuba City and Live Oak. The city of Yuba City is the major urban center within the county and is located along the Feather River in the east-central portion of the county where Highway 99 and State Route 20 intersect. The city of Live Oak is located in the northeast corner of the county north of Yuba City. Highway 99 is the major transportation corridor through both cities. Other transportation corridors include Highway 70 and Highway 113. In the more rural portions of the county, these corridors are limited to two-lane roads, but do carry relatively large volumes of inter-county traffic through the county's smaller, more rural communities. Figure 3-2 shows the locations of the incorporated cities and rural communities within the county.

The unincorporated area of the county includes several rural communities as follows. Meridian, in the northern portion of the county adjacent to the western county boundary along Highway 20; Sutter, located in the north-central portion of the County abutting the Sutter Buttes; Robbins, located in the southwest between the Sacramento River and the Sutter Bypass along Highway 113; and the communities of Rio Oso, Trowbridge, Nicolaus, and East Nicolaus, all clustered near the convergence of the Bear and Feather rivers in the southeast portion of the county near Highway 70. Another small community found within the county that does not have an adopted community boundary includes Pleasant Grove, located in the southeast portion of the county.

SUTTER COUNTY General Plan



Legend

- County Boundary
- Sutter County
- City Boundary
- Rural Communities
- Butte Sink
- Sutter Buttes
- Rivers or Canals
- Interstate or Highway

Source: Sutter County, ESRI
Date Revised: May 21, 2010



SUTTER COUNTY AND SURROUNDING AREAS
Figure 3-2

Sutter County is a rural, agricultural area with over 98 percent of the county area designated for agricultural and open space uses, as shown in Table 3-1. As of July 2008, the County's total population was estimated to be approximately 96,095 people, of which approximately 26 percent (25,000 people) live in the unincorporated portion of the county.

Land Use	Acres	Percentage of Total County Land
Agricultural	328,208	86.6%
Residential	1,971	0.5%
Public and Airport	472	0.1%
Commercial	424	0.1%
Industrial	749	0.2%
Open Space, Parks and Golf Course	44,919	11.9%
Transportation and Utilities	1,809	0.5%
Vacant	323	0.1%
Total	378,875	100%
Source: Sutter County, 2010.		

GENERAL PLAN PROCESS/BACKGROUND

The current General Plan for Sutter County was adopted in 1996. Various elements of the General Plan have been amended over time, but the plan has not been comprehensively updated since its adoption. Much of the data, analyses, and policies in the 1996 plan do not reflect the current conditions in the county. As a result, an update of the General Plan is necessary to reflect the current vision for accommodating future growth and conservation within Sutter County through 2030.

Sutter County initiated its General Plan update process in late 2007. At that time, the County Board of Supervisors appointed a 25-member General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to help direct and provide input on the General Plan update. The GPAC members represented various interests within the county, including agriculture, environment, economic development, and business. The GPAC met ten times in 2008 and 2009, and provided direction on the foundational documents prepared for the general plan, as well as the various land use alternatives.

In early 2008, the County prepared a Technical Background Report (TBR) and a Planning Issues Report. The TBR presents the physical, social, and economic information required to support the preparation of the General Plan and serves as the base document from which subsequent planning policies and programs are formulated. The Planning Issues Report identifies and describes the key physical, environmental, economic, cultural, and social issues considered in the General Plan.

Since the beginning of the General Plan update process, the County has held two rounds of community workshops for a total of seven separate workshops. The first round of community workshops solicited input on key issues and community values and were held at four locations throughout the county in April 2008. Input received at these workshops, as well as through stakeholder interviews, GPAC meetings, and a joint Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors workshop were used to prepare a set of guiding principles and a vision that established a conceptual foundation for the County's General Plan. In June 2008, the County Board of Supervisors adopted the guiding principles and vision for the future which provides the foundation for the General Plan goals and policies.

In September 2008, the County held a second round of three community workshops to gather input on land use growth and preservation alternatives (land use alternatives) for the unincorporated portions of the county. Based on input received from the community, GPAC, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors the land use alternatives were revised. In late 2009, the Board of Supervisors gave staff direction to develop the Draft General Plan and prepare the required environmental documentation based on the Preferred Land Use Map.

It should be noted that a 10-member Agricultural Focus Group was formed in late 2008 consisting of members representing different agricultural interests. The Focus Group met six times and provided input on agricultural issues related to the land use alternatives and General Plan policies.

State law requires that every county and city in California prepare and maintain a general plan. The general plan serves as the jurisdiction's "constitution" for decisions concerning land use and resource conservation. The general plan provides guidance to decision-makers regarding the allocation of resources and is the official statement of the jurisdiction regarding the extent and types of development needed to achieve the community's physical, economic, social, and environmental goals. All specific plans, subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning decisions must be consistent with the local jurisdiction's general plan.

Under State law, each county and city general plan must contain the following seven elements:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Noise

- Safety

California Government Code section 65303 permits local jurisdictions to formulate other elements, which, in the “judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.” These “optional” elements are as legally binding as the mandatory elements. Sutter County includes the following optional elements in its General Plan:

- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Community Services

Although the general plan consists of individual elements that address specific areas of concern, it also embodies a comprehensive and integrated planning approach for Sutter County.

Existing Adopted Land Use Plans

Within Sutter County there are two incorporated city's; Yuba City and Live Oak. The incorporated cities of Yuba City and Live Oak each have their own adopted General Plans to guide development within their boundaries. In addition, the County recently adopted the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan (SPSP) that covers approximately 7,500 acres in the southern portion of the county. A brief discussion of adopted land use plans within the County is included below.

Sutter Pointe Specific Plan

In June 2009, the County adopted the SPSP project. The SPSP project encompasses approximately 7,500 acres and is located in the southernmost portion of the county adjacent to the Sacramento County line and a portion of the Placer County line, within an area designated under the 1996 General Plan for Industrial/Commercial Reserve (I/C) uses (as shown on Figure 3-3). The SPSP is the result of the approval of Measure M in 2004, an advisory ballot measure approved by Sutter County voters. Much of the land within the SPSP is designated for industrial or commercial uses in an attempt to attract new employers to the County to provide jobs, industry, commerce, education, housing, recreation, and open space. The plan includes a maximum of 3,600 acres of commercial and industrial parks; a minimum of 1,000 acres for schools, parks, open space, libraries, and other community facilities; and 2,900 acres or less of residential uses, as well as all necessary infrastructure and public service facilities necessary to serve the plan area. Buildout of the plan area is estimated to take between 20 to 30 years, depending upon market conditions.

The General Plan does not propose to make any changes to the SPSP. The general plan adjusted buildout growth assumptions assume buildout of the first phase of the Sutter Pointe project (Phase 1 and Phase A) and for the purposes of the EIR include this as a future Growth Area. However, since an EIR was recently completed for the SPSP project this EIR does not include this area within the impact analysis, but provides a brief summary of the relevant SPSP EIR findings in each technical section.

City of Yuba City

The City of Yuba City is located in the northeast portion of the county and encompasses approximately 14 square miles (8,965 acres) of land. The City adopted a new General Plan in 2004. According to the General Plan Diagram, last updated in April 2006, the city's General Plan land use designations are primarily for low density residential uses, although areas of medium and medium/high density residential do occur within the City's planning area. In particular, the higher-density residential uses are found in the older portions of the City closest to the Feather River, along major transportation corridors such as Highway 99 and State Route 20, as well as nearby commercial centers. Commercial, public, and light industrial land use designations in the city tend to be distributed in a similar fashion: within older portions of the City and along Highway 99 and State Route 20.

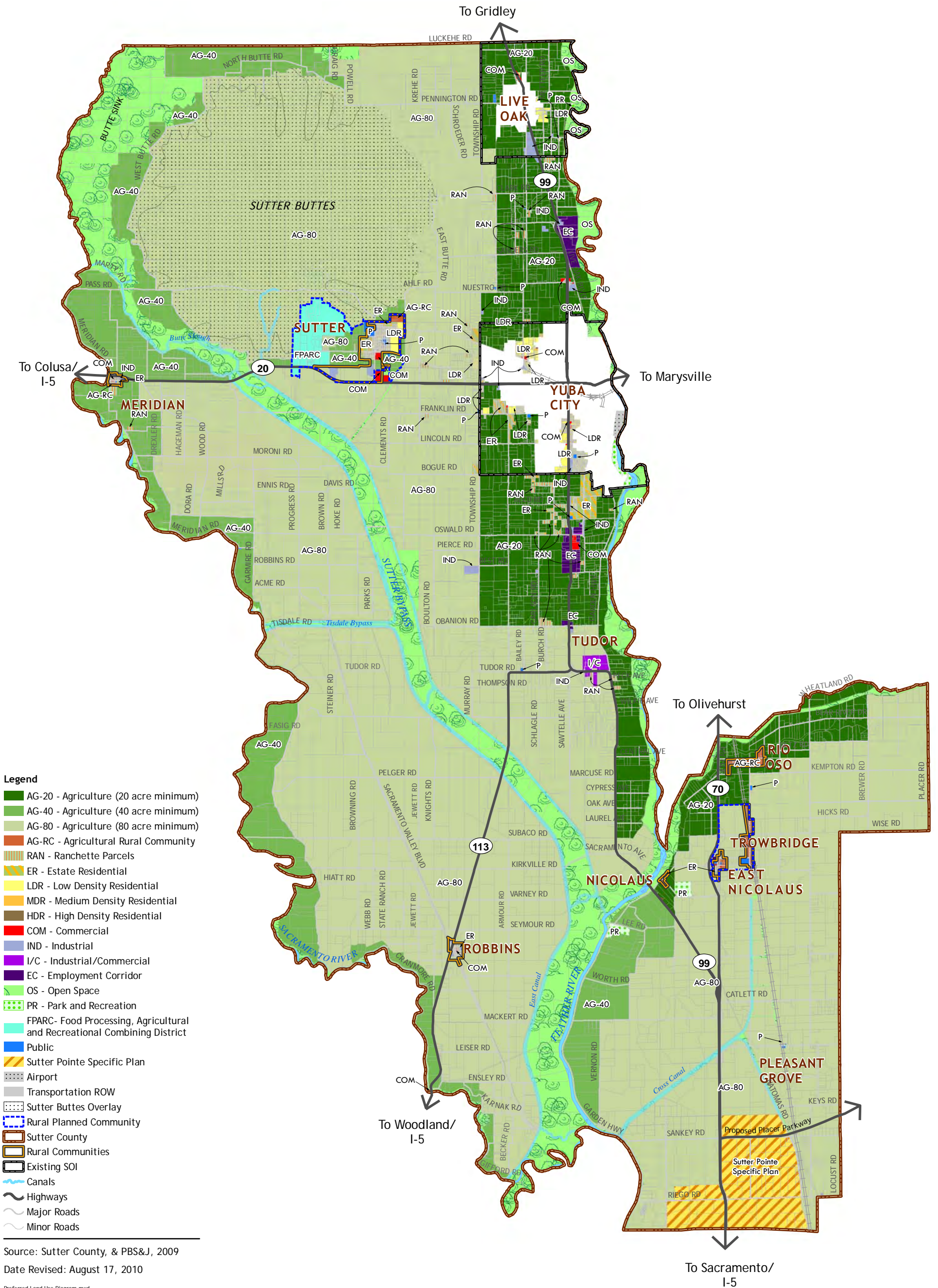
City of Live Oak

The City of Live Oak recently completed updating their General Plan in late 2009/early 2010. The City of Live Oak is located just north of Yuba City in the northeast portion of the county and encompasses approximately two square miles (1,165 acres).

The new General Plan will account for major growth and changes in land use that have occurred in the City since the last update of the General Plan that occurred in the mid-1990s. The General Plan land use map includes the addition of some commercial, civic, historical, and mixed-use land use designations to the City's central area, within the current city limits. Outside of the City's boundary, primarily single family residential land use designations are proposed along with some areas designated for higher density residential, along with supporting uses, such as schools, parks, and commercial spread throughout the sphere of influence.

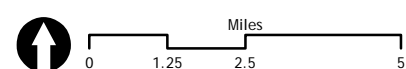
PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Sutter County seeks to achieve the following objectives for the proposed General Plan identified by the community during the public outreach and participation process, as discussed above. These objectives are the Guiding Principles that were adopted to provide guidance for the development of land use alternatives and the General Plan policies.



Source: Sutter County, & PBS&J, 2009
Date Revised: August 17, 2010

Preferred Land Use Diagram.mxd



- Maintain a High Quality, Rural Lifestyle

Preserve the County's rural, small town character, high quality of life, and agricultural heritage including quality farmlands.

Promote uses that support the economic, cultural and scenic values of agriculture.

Ensure opportunities for existing and future generations to live, work and succeed in Sutter County.

Value and respect the County's cultural diversity and traditions.

- Support a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy

Create a healthy and diverse economy by providing a regulatory climate that attracts new industries and a broad range of jobs with livable wages and opportunities for advancement.

Maintain a viable agricultural industry by sustaining existing agricultural operations, diversifying the agricultural economy, and promoting agricultural businesses that utilize "cutting-edge" technology.

Enhance local shopping, services, and opportunities for small businesses.

- Ensure Managed and Efficient Growth

Focus new urban growth within the County's cities and other clearly defined and comprehensively planned development areas.

Promote efficient development patterns that promote orderly growth and discourage sprawl.

Ensure new development is compatible with agricultural operations and open space preservation.

- Protect and Enhance Natural Resources

Protect environmental resources including the Sutter Buttes, river corridors, fish and wildlife habitats, and other significant resources for future generations.

Enhance public access to the rivers and maximize opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy this resource.

- Provide a Safe Place to Live

Improve the levee system and provide sufficient and reliable flood protection for County residents and businesses.

Increase law enforcement's presence to reduce crime, minimize youth delinquency, and improve the sense of security.

- Support a Variety of Mobility Options

Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that links communities within Sutter County, and connects the County to the rest of the region.

Ensure new development does not adversely impact traffic flows.

Enhance transit and commuter rail service to encourage higher ridership and reduce automobile dependence.

Provide additional interconnected bike lanes, pedestrian paths, and trails to promote alternative transportation choices and added recreational opportunities.

Improve roadway maintenance and safety.

- Provide Adequate and Equitable Community Services and Infrastructure

Promote quality education, libraries, fire protection, health and other community services to adequately provide for existing and future residents and businesses.

Work in partnership with the cities and other public and private entities to provide additional parks and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for local residents and visitors, with priority in areas that are underserved.

Explore opportunities to expand higher education in Sutter County.

Enhance water and sewer services within the County, and preserve existing water rights.

- Promote Resource Conservation and Sustainability

Promote alternative energy use, water conservation, solid waste reduction and recycling, and other strategies to ensure a more sustainable County.

Support land use patterns, alternative mobility systems, "green" building and energy options, and other measures that reduce carbon emissions.

DRAFT SUTTER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The proposed General Plan supports a broad continuation of the current land use pattern within the county, while affording new opportunities for growth and change. It balances the County's vision to maintain and enhance its high quality rural lifestyle, agricultural heritage, and natural resources, with a commitment to promoting a vibrant and sustainable economy that attracts diverse jobs and services.

This section briefly describes the contents of the General Plan including the proposed land use changes and the resulting potential growth that may occur within the county through the horizon year of 2030. Figure 3-3 includes the County's preferred land use map.

Based upon the growth projections, "buildout" of the proposed Sutter County General Plan would not occur for many years beyond the 2030 horizon year (if at all). For the purposes of this EIR, analysis of development that is speculative and not reasonably foreseeable may result in impacts that are overstated and incorrect. For this reason, the EIR analyzes development based upon accepted market based growth projections adjusted to the General Plan horizon year of 2030.

The starting point for the EIR market projections is SACOG's Sacmet travel demand forecasting model. The Sacmet model is based on SACOG's 2035 growth projections reflective of the Regional Blueprint. The growth projections incorporated in the Sacmet model have been adjusted for the purposes of this EIR specific to Sutter County to ensure that the projections accurately reflect the proposed General Plan. These adjustments specifically include:

- The amount of residential development in Sutter County has been held constant with the growth increment identified in the Sacmet model. However, some of this development has been shifted internally within the county to the SPSP area to reflect anticipated General Plan growth patterns.
- The amount of commercial and industrial development projected for the county has been increased beyond the growth projections in the Sacmet model to reflect the additional commercial and industrial land uses assigned by the General Plan (Sutter Pointe, Industrial/Commercial, and Industrial/Commercial Reserve) and the General Plan's policy direction that promotes the development of these land uses. This increase is accomplished by incorporating full buildout of the commercial and industrial land uses within Phases 1 and A of the SPSP.

The increase in commercial and industrial development considers the *Demand for Commercial, Industrial, and Residential Land in Sutter County, 2007-2030* prepared for the General Plan in 2008 by Applied Development Economics. This analysis reviews the range of available market based growth projections for Sutter County, and using those projections as a base, projects potential levels of industrial and commercial development that could

occur should the County be successful in increasing its historic capture of the region's growth of those uses.

The revised 2035 growth projections were then adjusted to the General Plan horizon year of 2030 for the purposes of the EIR analysis. The 2009-2035 increment of growth (2035 total projected growth less 2009 existing conditions) was back cast proportionally to 2030. Because the Climate Action Plan (CAP) requires 2020 projections, this same 2009-2035 increment of growth was also back cast proportionally to 2020. In both cases, the growth increment for the SPSP project reflects that development of the SPSP is currently anticipated to be initiated by approximately 2015.

The above adjustments result in 2030 EIR and 2020 CAP growth levels that exceed the SACOG projections included in the Sacmet model, but are reflective of the proposed General Plan and help to ensure that the resulting analyses are consistent and reasonably reflect foreseeable growth and potential impacts. Table 3-2 indicates the adjusted buildout growth assumptions for the General Plan based on the number of new residential units, jobs, and increase in population. Table 3-3 provides the full buildout assumptions for the General Plan based on the maximum holding capacity of the land. The EIR analysis evaluates impacts associated with both the adjusted buildout as well as the full buildout of the General Plan.

General Plan Elements

The proposed General Plan includes the following ten elements:

- Land Use
- Agricultural Resources
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Mobility
- Infrastructure
- Public Services
- Environmental Resources
- Public Health and Safety
- Noise

Each of the ten elements listed above identifies goals and policies specific to that issue area to provide future guidance for development within the county. A brief description of each element is included below.

TABLE 3-2

**SUTTER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN ADJUSTED BUILDOUT
GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS**

	Existing (2009) ¹	Sutter Pointe Specific Plan ²	2009-2030 Net New Growth ³	General Plan Adjusted Buildout ⁴
Residential Units				
Low Density ⁵	9,048	345	5,771	15,164
Medium Density	720	5,389	0 ⁶	5,533
High Density	0	2,036	450	2,486
Total Units	9,768	7,770	6,221	23,183
Population⁷	28,505	20,621	17,944	65,475
Jobs	7,632 ⁸	13,027 ⁹	9,906 ⁹	30,565
Commercial (sf)	1,359,519	1,530,000	2,818,328	5,707,847
Industrial (sf)	3,279,679	7,425,000	4,393,073	15,097,752
Mixed Use¹⁰	0	1,537,000	0	1,537,000

Notes:

1. Source: Sutter County, 2009.
 2. Sutter County, *Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Draft EIR*, December 2008. This project was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 30, 2009. This assumes Phase 1 and Phase a would be built out by 2030.
 3. Does not include Sutter Pointe Specific Plan.
 4. The 2030 Sutter County General Plan only includes growth assumptions for the unincorporated county. Due to current market conditions and growth projections for the region, the County used density/intensity assumptions for new growth that are expected to occur within the timeframe of the General Plan, reflecting a foreseeable/adjusted buildout scenario. The adjusted buildout numbers include density assumptions; therefore, the adjusted buildout numbers do not necessarily reflect an additive scenario.
 5. Includes the following low density residential uses: AG-20, AG-40, AG-80, AG-RC, AP/APR, RAN, ER, and LDR.
 6. No existing units would be lost, but approximately 78 acres currently designated as medium density residential would be redesignated as other uses.
 7. Persons per household assumptions: low density = 2.93; medium density = 2.77; high density = 2.30. Persons per household rates from the Sutter County, *Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Draft EIR*, December 2008.
 8. Employment estimate from 2007. Source: Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), March 15, 2001 Projections.
 9. Assumes the following: Commercial uses have a split of 0.80 Retail with 1 employee per 500 sf, 0.20 Office with 1 employee per 400 sf; Industrial uses have a split of 0.60 Heavy Industrial with 1 employee per 1,000 sf, 0.40 Light Industrial with 1 employee per 1,300 sf.
 10. Uses consist of commercial, office, and civic uses.
- Source: Sutter County, 2010, PBS&J, 2010.

TABLE 3-3

**SUTTER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN FULL BUILDOUT
GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS**

	Existing (2009) ¹	Sutter Pointe Specific Plan ²	2009-2030 Net New Growth ³	General Plan Full Buildout ⁴
Residential Units				
Low Density ⁵	9,048	1,441	5,771	16,260
Medium Density	720	12,014	0 ⁶	12,110
High Density	0	4,025	450	4,475
Total Units	9,768	17,480	6,221	32,845
Population⁷	28,505	46,758	17,941	91,479
Jobs	7,632 ⁸	55,000 ¹⁰	26,445 ⁹	89,077 ⁹
Commercial (sf)	1,359,519	3,665,800	4,628,228	9,653,547
Industrial (sf)	3,279,679	43,260,000	18,426,387	64,966,066
Mixed Use¹³	0	2,501,000	0	2,501,000

Notes:

- Source: Sutter County, 2009.
- Sutter County, *Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Draft EIR*, December 2008. This project was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 30, 2009.
- Does not include Sutter Pointe Specific Plan.
- The 2030 Sutter County General Plan only includes growth assumptions for the unincorporated county.
- Includes the following low density residential uses: AG-20, AG-40, AG-80, AG-RC, AP/APR, RAN, ER, and LDR.
- No existing units would be lost, but approximately 78 acres currently designated as medium density residential would be redesignated as other uses.
- Persons per household assumptions: low density = 2.93; medium density = 2.77; high density = 2.30. Persons per household rates from the Sutter County, *Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Draft EIR*, December 2008.
- Employment estimate from 2007. Source: Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), March 15, 2001 Projections.
- Assumes the following: Commercial uses have a split of 0.80 Retail with 1 employee per 500 sf, 0.20 Office with 1 employee per 400 sf; Industrial uses have a split of 0.60 Heavy Industrial with 1 employee per 1,000 sf, 0.40 Light Industrial with 1 employee per 1,300 sf.
- Sutter County, *Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Draft EIR*, December 2008.
- Includes 6,225,000 sq. ft. of E1 Interim Flood Zone (E1F). For purposes of this analysis, E1F yields are applied to the E1 land use designation. The Sutter Pointe Specific Plan has designated approximately 408 acres E1F to provide for interim flood control to contain the flood waters associated with the Sankey Gap. In the future, should alternate flood control measures become feasible, areas designates as E1F may be developed with uses consistent with the E1 land use designation. Represents Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Employment 1 (E1) and E1 Interim Flood Zone (E1F) land use designations as well as the Commercial Retail (CR) Land Use Designation. In instances where industrial uses are combined with commercial uses, the square footages were split 80% IND and 20% COM.
- Includes 6,225,000 sq. ft. of E1 Interim Flood Zone (E1F). For purposes of this analysis, E1F yields are applied to the E1 land use designation. The Sutter Pointe Specific Plan has designated approximately 408 acres E1F to provide for interim flood control to contain the flood waters associated with the Sankey Gap. In the future, should alternate flood control measures become feasible, areas designates as E1F may be developed with uses consistent with the E1 land use designation. Represents Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Employment 1 (E1) and E1 Interim Flood Zone (E1F) land use designations as well as the Employment 2 (E2) Land Use Designation. In instances where industrial uses are combined with commercial uses, the square footages were split 80% IND and 20% COM.
- Uses consist of commercial, office, and civic uses.

Source: Sutter County, 2010, PBS&J, 2010.

Land Use

The Land Use Element addresses the State requirements for land use elements and establishes specific goals and policies that provide direction and guidance for the use and development of lands within the unincorporated county. The Land Use Element includes the Land Use Map, which designates all lands within the unincorporated county for a specific use and shows the general distribution of planned land uses throughout the unincorporated

county based upon the policies of the Draft General Plan. A description of the proposed land use designations is included at the end of this discussion. The Preferred Land Use Map is included as Figure 3-3.

The General Plan applies three general land development categories – (1) Agricultural and Open Space, (2) Rural Communities, and (3) Growth Areas – that generally reflect the different character and intensity of existing and planned land uses. The Agricultural and Open Space category identifies those areas to be set aside for the long-term conservation of agriculture, natural resources, and related uses. The Rural Communities category identifies those small, unincorporated communities in the county to be protected and enhanced, as well as potential new limited intensity development areas. The Growth Areas category identifies those areas where new growth and development should be directed, representing the primary locations where change and growth would occur in the county.

Growth Areas

The General Plan identifies five new Growth Areas that include those portions of the county that are in close proximity to, and may connect with, existing public infrastructure and services, can financially support the cost of independently providing such public services, or can rely on individual services with the intensity of uses correspondingly limited. The five specific locations identified for new growth are summarized below with acreages included on Table 3-4. In total, approximately 32,681 acres or slightly over 8 percent of unincorporated lands have been identified as potential growth areas (including the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan that was recently adopted by the County).

1. *Spheres of Influence (SOI)* - The SOI for the County's incorporated cities, Yuba City and Live Oak, including the possible future expansion of Yuba City's SOI. It is intended that future growth in the SOI areas would occur subject to a comprehensive and coordinated City-County planning effort followed by annexation to and provision of urban services from the cities. The General Plan includes assumptions for future growth within specific designated areas and does not assume development of the entire SOI area.

Within the Yuba City SOI approximately 3,800 acres is designated for agriculture or open space. An additional 1,160 acres is proposed to be annexed to the City as part of the Lincoln East Specific Plan. Therefore, the remaining 1,500 acres is designated for future growth. Approximately 269 acres of undeveloped land within the Live Oak SOI is designated for development. Over 6,000 acres are designated for agricultural and open space uses or is already developed.

TABLE 3-4	
SUTTER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN - GROWTH AREAS	
Growth Areas	Acreage¹
Spheres of Influence (SOI)	
Live Oak SOI	6,511
Yuba City SOI	5,886
Possible Future Expanded Yuba City SOI ²	5,079
Subtotal--SOI	17,476
Sutter Pointe Specific Plan	7,528
Rural Planned Communities	
Sutter	4,654
East Nicolaus/Trowbridge ³	1,647
Subtotal	6,301
Employment Corridor	
North of Yuba City	526
South of Yuba City	528
Subtotal	1,054
Industrial/Commercial ⁴	322
TOTAL	32,681 acres
Notes:	
1. Total gross acreage within the boundaries of each growth area does not net out existing development, roads, etc.	
2. Subject to final agreement between the County and City and approved by LAFCo.	
3. Includes Industrial/commercial within east Nicolaus/Trowbridge Rural Planned Community.	
4. Within the community of Tudor.	
Source: Sutter County, Draft Sutter County General Plan, March 2010.	

2. *Sutter Pointe Specific Plan* - The SPSP was approved in June 2009 and is located in the southern unincorporated portion of the county. Sutter Pointe is planned as a mixed-use urban community and has been structured to fully fund required urban services and facilitate future incorporation as an independent new city. The environmental impacts associated with development in this area have been previously addressed in the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan EIR (June 2009). Therefore, this EIR does not address potential impacts associated with development within this portion of the county.

3. *Rural Planned Communities* - There are two Rural Planned Communities designated in the General Plan; one in the community of Sutter, and the other overlapping the communities of East Nicolaus and Trowbridge. These areas are subject to future comprehensive planning processes to establish new mixed-use communities, provide a full level of public services, and consider possible incorporation as new cities.

4. *Employment Corridor* - Employment Corridor land uses are located along the Highway 99 corridor, north and south of the city of Yuba City. Planning of these uses will be coordinated with Yuba City. While the potential exists that public services and infrastructure may be extended to these uses, the type and intensity of development may be limited by the County based upon the availability of such services.

5. *Tudor Industrial/Commercial* – Industrial/Commercial uses along Highway 99 within the community of Tudor are proposed. The type and intensity of development allowed in this area may be limited by the County based upon the availability of public infrastructure and services.

Land Use Designations

The proposed General Plan includes a total of 14 different land use designations as well as areas identified as Special Designations. Each land use designation is described below.

Agricultural 20, 40, and 80 (AG-20, AG-40, AG-80): Density AG-20: 0.05 du/gross acre (20 acre minimum parcel size) AG-40: 0.03 du/gross acre (40 acre minimum parcel size) AG-80: 0.01 du/gross acre (80 acre minimum parcel size). The Agriculture designation provides for the long-term production, processing, distribution, and sale of food and fiber on prime agricultural soils and other productive and potentially productive lands. This designation is applied in locations that have minimal intrusion and conflict from non-agricultural uses, or where such conflicts can be mitigated. Typical permitted uses include crop production, orchards, grazing, pasture and rangeland, and associated residences and agricultural support uses.

Agriculture Rural Community (AG-RC): Density: 0.40 du/adjusted gross acre (1 unit per lot). This designation applies to lands in rural communities that can be used for small-scale ranching and farming operations with 2½ acre minimum parcel sizes. Typical allowed uses include: single family dwellings and one temporary secondary unit per existing lot, if they comply with Environmental Health requirements, agricultural uses, equestrian facilities, and public utility and safety facilities. While limited AG-RC areas exist in some rural communities, the General Plan does not identify a future need for, or provide for further allocation of, this land use designation. Undeveloped existing Agriculture Rural Community land use may develop in accordance with established standards and criteria.

Ranchette (RAN): Density: 0.10 to 0.30/adjusted gross acre. This designation is intended to accommodate small farms and large lot residential areas in rural portions of the county outside of Yuba City and Live Oak spheres of influence. Parcel sizes range from 3 to 10 acres in size. Typical permitted uses include one single-family detached dwelling per existing lot, guesthouses, apiaries, crops and tree farming, grazing, animal husbandry, nursery, and greenhouses. This designation allows for expanded agricultural uses beyond those permitted by the Estates Residential (ER) land use designation below. While scattered Ranchette uses exist in the County, the General Plan does not provide for further allocation of this land use designation. Undeveloped existing Ranchette land use may develop in accordance with established standards and criteria.

Estates Residential (ER): Density: 0.5 to 2 du/adjusted gross acre. This designation is applied to areas located within existing rural communities, new Rural Planned Communities, and unincorporated areas within the Live Oak SOI and both the existing or possible future Yuba City sphere of influence. This designation is comprised of residential development on larger parcels ranging from 1/2 to 3 acres in size. The primary use is large lot single-family detached dwellings including guesthouses. To avoid the premature conversion of agricultural lands and inefficient land use patterns, the amount of Estate Residential land use allocated within the County is limited. Prior to designating new Estate Residential land use, the Board of Supervisors shall find the following: (1) there is a market demand for the use, (2) existing Estate Residential land uses have been substantially built out, (3) the use can be adequately served by proposed services and infrastructure available at the time of project approval (either community or individual water and wastewater systems, and (4) the use is compatible with adjacent and nearby uses.

Low Density Residential (LDR): Density: 2 to 8 du/adjusted gross acre. This designation is applied to suburban and urban areas suitable for single-family residential neighborhoods, with individual homes on lots ranging in area from 5,000 square feet to one half acre. The density range is between 2 to 8 dwelling units per acre. Typical land uses include: detached single-family dwellings, and residential accessory uses; churches, day care, and necessary public utility and safety facilities. Secondary dwelling units may be permitted subject to County standards.

Medium Density Residential (MDR): Density: 8.1 to 20 du/adjusted gross acre. The Medium Density Residential designation is applied to suburban and urban areas suitable for small-lot and multi-family residential neighborhoods. Typical permitted uses include: attached and detached single-family dwellings, secondary dwellings, a wide range of multi-family dwellings, day care, churches, bed and breakfasts, offices, and necessary public utility and safety facilities.

High Density Residential (HDR): Density: 20.1+ du/adjusted gross acre. This designation is intended to provide for residential neighborhoods of multi-family units such as apartments townhome and/or condominiums. This designation is applied to urban areas in the county where residential development will be near multi-modal transportation corridors, other major commercial and employment centers, schools and community services. Typical permitted uses include: attached single-family dwellings, a wide range of multi-family dwellings, day care, churches, bed and breakfasts, offices, care facilities, and necessary public utility and safety facilities.

Commercial (COM): Intensity: FAR .35. The Commercial designation provides for a mix of neighborhood, community, highway, and regional retail, office, service, and related uses. This designation is applied primarily within existing rural communities and new Growth Areas.

Industrial (IND): Intensity: FAR .50. The Industrial designation provides for light industrial, general industrial and manufacturing uses. This designation is applied primarily within existing rural communities and new Growth Areas. Typical permitted uses are those that provide manufacturing, assembling, processing, fabricating, bulk handling of products, storage, warehousing, and heavy trucking. Light and heavy industries are required to conduct their operations in designated areas and minimize external visual and operational impacts on adjoining uses.

Industrial/Commercial (IND/COMM): Intensity: FAR .35 Commercial/.50 Industrial Uses. The Industrial/Commercial designation provides for a broad mix of industrial and commercial uses. This designation is applied primarily within new Growth Areas. Typical permitted uses include all uses provided for under the Commercial and Industrial land use categories. The type and intensity of Industrial/Commercial uses may be limited based upon the infrastructure and services available at the time of project approval. If public services are not available, uses may be limited to “dry” or other uses that do not require urban services. A dry use would include, for example, sewage disposal sized to serve only the onsite employees, not to include process water or for facilities that require a public water system. All Industrial/Commercial uses are to be designed and mitigated to be compatible with adjacent uses.

Employment Corridor (EC): Intensity: FAR .35 Commercial/.50 Industrial Uses. The Employment Corridor designation provides for the same broad mix of industrial and commercial uses as the Industrial/Commercial designation. The Employment Corridor designation is also applied within new Growth Areas, along the Highway 99 corridor north and south of Yuba City, and on the east side of Highway 70 in East Nicolaus. It is subject to the same restrictions on the type and intensity of uses based upon infrastructure and service availability (either community or individual water and wastewater systems), and provisions relating to compatibility with adjacent uses, as the Industrial/Commercial designation. The primary difference is that the Employment Corridor designation provides the opportunity for streamlined development review for employment and revenue generating land use that meet specified criteria.

Public (P): The Public designation is applied to lands and facilities located throughout the County that are owned and operated by public agencies. Typical permitted uses include schools, libraries, fire stations and other emergency service facilities, and public/government offices and property. Additional public uses and facilities may be provided within other land use designations.

Airport (A): The Airport designation is applied to the Sutter County Airport, a Class A-II airport established in 1947 and operated by the County. Typical permitted uses include

runways, hangers, tie down spaces, maintenance facilities, vehicle parking, and airport related businesses.

Park and Recreation (PR): The Parks and Recreation designation is applied to active and passive park and open space lands and recreational facilities located throughout the county. Beyond traditional neighborhood, community, and regional parks, this designation protects mountains, river banks, or other areas identified by the County as having particular natural beauty, historical value, or other importance for use as public or private parks or outdoor recreational facilities. Typical permitted uses include outdoor recreational activities such as campgrounds, marinas, natural and undeveloped recreation areas, golf courses, active parks, sports fields, riding clubs, stables and related recreational uses.

Open Space (OS): The Open Space designation identifies and permanently protects important open space lands within Sutter County due to their value as habitat, topography, scenic quality, public safety, or comparable purpose. Typical Open Space lands include: non-agricultural areas which contain significant vegetation, wildlife, and/or habitat resources; and areas which present conditions hazardous to rural and urban development. Typical permitted uses include resource preservation, agriculture, passive public recreation, buffers and greenbelts.

Special Designations and Overlay Designations

In addition, there are a number of Special Designations and Overlay land use designations that are designed to accommodate uses that are already either adopted as part of a separate planning process (i.e., Sutter Pointe Specific Plan), existing, or in protected areas (i.e., Sutter Buttes). Below is a description of those areas designated as Special Designation and Overlay.

Food Processing, Agricultural and Recreational Combining District (FPARC): Density/Intensity: See FPARC description in the general plan. The FPARC designation was approved by the residents of Sutter County as ballot Measure A in 1982. FPARC, located near the community of Sutter, provides an area where food processing and associated industries, together with appurtenant functions thereof, may locate outside the urban centers and in close proximity to recreation and open space areas in a manner that minimizes adverse environmental impacts and protects and enhances agricultural productivity. The General Plan proposes that the elimination of FPARC be submitted to the voters for approval; that the area be redesignated to Agriculture-80 or other appropriate land use; and that the FPARC area be subject to consideration of new land uses through a future comprehensive planning process as part of the Sutter Rural Planned Community.

Sutter Pointe Specific Plan Density/Intensity: See SPSP document. The SPSP was adopted in June 2009 and is intended to accommodate a mixed-use master planned community guided by the principles of advisory Measure M approved by the residents of Sutter County in 2004. Sutter Pointe is planned as a mixed-use urban community and has been structured to fully fund required urban services and facilitate future incorporation as an independent new city. Detailed land use designations, densities and intensities, and associated development requirements for Sutter Pointe are defined within the adopted SPSP.

Rural Planned Community Overlay (RPC): The Rural Planned Community Overlay identifies areas subject to future comprehensive planning (Specific Plan) processes to establish new mixed-use communities, provide a full level of public services, and consider possible incorporation as new cities. Two potential Rural Planned Communities are identified: one in the community of Sutter and the other overlapping the communities of East Nicolaus and Trowbridge. Board of Supervisor's approval is required prior to initiating planning of each Rural Planned Community. Ultimate land uses must be consistent with the adopted specific plans.

Sutter Buttes Overlay (SB): The Sutter Buttes Overlay is coterminous with and reinforces the Sutter Buttes Overlay Zone. The intent is to preserve the cultural, historic, geologic, and visual values of the Sutter Buttes that contribute to the overall image of Sutter County. Structures within the Overlay that are visible from public roads or adjacent residences are subject to development standards that address site planning, landscaping, screening, grading, tree removal, roof areas and materials, building colors, roads and driveways, lighting, and other factors, and require approval of a zoning clearance.

Commercial Recreation Overlay (CR): The Commercial Recreation Overlay is applied along and adjacent to the Sacramento, Feather, and Bear River corridors. It provides opportunities for limited intensity river focused commercial and recreational uses. Typical uses permitted include river oriented and/or tourist serving eating and drinking establishments, food and beverage sales, general stores, lodging facilities, resorts, campgrounds, bait and tackle shops, boat ramps, marinas, picnic areas, public and private recreational facilities, interpretive centers, trails, wedding or special event facilities, and other complimentary uses. All uses permitted under this designation are subject to County discretionary approval and Design Review to ensure high quality design, visual and operational compatibility with surrounding uses and character of the area, including an analysis of potential impacts to agricultural operations in the project's vicinity, mitigation of environmental impacts, and availability of adequate infrastructure and services to support the proposed uses. Areas within, or "inside", the river levees are the primary areas for consideration of this overlay, however, adjacent areas "outside" the levee may also be considered when determined to be necessary for the proposed use and if the use will not have an adverse impact on adjacent agricultural operations or natural resources.

Agricultural Resources

The Agricultural Resources Element is an optional element that addresses the requirements of Government Code section 65560.b.2 related to agriculture and rangeland. This element contains goals and policies that support the preservation of agriculture and continued agricultural operations to promote a healthy agricultural economy and to raise awareness of the importance of agriculture in the county.

Housing

The Housing Element addresses the requirements of Government Code sections 65580 to 65589.8. Housing Elements are updated as often as required by state statute and must include an overview of existing housing stock, provide an analysis of existing and future housing needs at all income levels, and a quantification of the number of new and/or preserved or rehabilitated housing units. The actual adoption of the Housing Element by the County will occur with the rest of the General Plan, which is anticipated for late 2010. Once adopted, the Housing Element will be submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for the statutorily-required 90-day review. HCD will then confirm the County's Housing Element is in compliance with State law with a "certification letter" provided to the County, which will bring the Housing Element process to a close.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Element is an optional element included in the General Plan for the County to explore opportunities to diversify its economic base and provide quality jobs for its residents. This Element provides direction regarding economic issues and strategies, and the goals focus on proper management of its public and economic development budgets, the creation of a business-friendly climate, investment in the County's labor force, and support of further economic diversification.

Mobility

The Mobility Element provides an overview of all transportation modes within the county including the roadway system, transit, bike, pedestrian, rail, and aviation. The Mobility Element also includes goals and policies related to enhancing increased mobility throughout the county as well as proposed mobility improvements. The General Plan Circulation Map is included in this element. This element establishes specific service standards that guide development of the transportation and mobility system throughout the county.

Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Element includes goals and policies that address the treatment and provision of water, wastewater treatment and disposal, storm drain treatment and disposal, solid waste removal and disposal, energy (electricity, natural gas), and telecommunications (internet). This element addresses the infrastructure necessary to support future development within the county.

Public Services

The Public Services Element contains information pertaining to future needs associated with law enforcement, fire and emergency services, schools, libraries, and parks and recreation facilities. Specific goals and policies are contained within this element that address future expansion of these services to accommodate an increase in county residents.

Environmental Resources

The Environmental Resources Element satisfies the State requirement for both the conservation element and open space element. This element focuses on the preservation, protection and management of biological resources and open space, mineral resources, water resources and quality, visual resources, air quality, and cultural resources present in the county. Specific goals and policies are included that address these resources.

Public Health and Safety

The Public Health and Safety Element addresses the requirements of the safety element (Government Code section 65302g). This element includes goals and policies that address safety concerns associated with flooding, geologic and seismic hazards, the transport and use of hazardous materials, and emergency responses and disaster preparedness.

Noise

The Noise Element addresses the requirements of Government Code section 65302f. Acceptable noise levels are established for all the various land uses and noise contours are prepared for the entire county.

EIR PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The Draft EIR analyzes the following alternatives to the proposed General Plan:

Alternative 1: No Project/2015 General Plan – Under this alternative, development for the proposed Sutter County General Plan would not occur. Development within the county would be guided by continued implementation of the existing goals,

policies, land use diagram, and mobility diagram included in the 1996 General Plan (adopted in 1996 and most recently amended on December 19, 2006).

Alternative 2: FPARC Redesignated – Under this alternative, development would be consistent with the proposed Sutter County General Plan with the exception of the 1,817 acres currently designated as Food Processing, Agricultural and Recreational Combining District (FPARC) near the community of Sutter. This area would be redesignated to Agricultural 80-acre minimum (AG-80).

Alternative 3: Reduction in Industrial and Commercial Land – This alternative would reduce the amount of land designated for Industrial and Commercial (I/C) uses as well as land designated for future Employment Corridor (EC) by 50 percent. The development assumptions for the Sutter Point Specific Plan would stay the same since this is an approved project in the county. The number of jobs would also be reduced to accommodate this reduction in employment-generating uses. The total number of jobs would be 25,612 under the adjusted buildout scenario and 75,854 under full buildout conditions.

REQUIRED APPROVALS

Approvals for the General Plan include certification of the EIR, adoption of required Findings, adoption of the Climate Action Plan, and approval of the General Plan. In addition to the approvals required from Sutter County, the proposed project could require entitlements, approvals and permits from other agencies. For example, prior to review of the Draft General Plan the County will submit the draft Housing Element to the State HCD for review. The HCD will determine if the draft Housing Element substantially complies with State requirements for housing elements.

Subsequent Approvals

As stated in Chapter 1, Introduction, this document is a Program level EIR for the proposed General Plan and, in certain instances, may function as a project-level EIR for later projects based on the specific project. However, subsequent projects may still require additional environmental review. The County will review each application on a project-by-project basis, and, based on the details and specifics of the project will determine the appropriate environmental review.

If the General Plan is approved, the County may initiate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and other sections of the County Code to achieve consistency with the adopted General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance would further define land use designations and the performance standards applicable to the land use designations. The Zoning

Ordinance would also establish the land use entitlement process applicable to the land use designations. Additional approvals may include:

- Adoption of financing programs or fee programs for public infrastructure.
- Rezoning of parcels to ensure consistency with the new General Plan Land Use Diagram.
- Zoning Ordinance amendments to ensure consistency with the General Plan goals, policies and standards.
- Acquisition of land for public facilities, finance and construction of public infrastructure projects or consideration of private development requests for infrastructure projects such as transit and roadway improvements consistent with the General Plan Mobility Element, construction of parks, trails, infrastructure improvements (e.g., water distribution and treatment facilities, wastewater facilities, drainage improvements), other capital improvements, natural resource preservation and/or restoration.
- The County would consider approval of various private development entitlement requests (e.g., specific plans, master plans, tentative subdivision maps, design review, use permits) that are consistent with the General Plan and its Land Use Map.