3.1 LAND USE

3.1.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The city limits of the City of Rancho Cordova (City) are located entirely within the eastern portion of Sacramento County, covering approximately 33.6 square miles. The City consists of a wide range of existing land uses, including approximately 2,600 acres of residential development, 454 acres of commercial/retail uses, 972 acres of office uses, and 835 acres of industrial uses. In addition, there are an estimated 12,888 acres of agricultural (vacant) uses and more than 296 acres of public/private recreation and natural-preserve uses. Institutional uses such as schools, churches, and other public entities also serve as major land uses.

PROJECT SITE

The Rio del Oro Specific Plan area (i.e., project site) consists of approximately 3,828 acres in Rancho Cordova. The project site is approximately 1 mile south of U.S. Highway 50 (U.S. 50) (see Exhibits 2-1 and 2-2). Irregularly shaped, the property is located south of White Rock Road, north of Douglas Road, and east of Sunrise Boulevard.

Currently, the project site is mostly undeveloped. Most of the project site is being used as pastureland for cattle grazing by the Clark Cattle Company. Aggregate mining operations are occurring in the eastern portion of the site. Buildings, structures, roads, and limited utility infrastructure are owned by the Aerojet General Corporation (Aerojet) and are located in the central and southern portions of the site.

Currently, Teichert Aggregates, Inc. (Teichert) holds a County of Sacramento (County) Conditional Use Permit (No. 98-UPB-0503) for surface mining on 180 acres of the eastern portion of the project site (City of Rancho Cordova 2004) (see Exhibit 2-18 in Chapter 2, “Alternatives”). In June 2005, the City approved a second Conditional Use Permit application by Teichert to remove approximately 583 acres of the dredge tailings on the western portion of the project site in the proposed Phase 1 development area. In the future, the City expects to receive a third Implementation Permit application from Granite Construction Company to remove additional dredge tailings from the central portion of the Rio del Oro project site. The City would prepare another, separate environmental document to assess potential impacts from this future application. Although the environmental impacts of the mining activities have been addressed in separate environmental documents, a brief summary of the analysis of impacts that would occur under continuing mining activities is provided in Table 2-14. Assuming that the City approves the remaining application, all aggregate resources at the project site except those containing sensitive biological resources would be removed under Conditional Use and Implementation Permits before Rio del Oro construction within each phase of development. It should be noted that the removal of aggregate from the project site by Teichert and Granite Construction would have independent functional utility absent approval of a specific plan and subsequent development of the project, and that this resource would be removed even if plans for site development were not imminent, or even ultimately approved.

ADJACENT LAND USES

Adjacent land uses are primarily a mix of urban, developing urban, and agricultural uses. Lands north of the project site are owned by Aerojet and are currently used for aerospace testing facilities and associated buffer lands. Aerojet land north of White Rock Road, approximately 1 mile from the project site and adjacent to U.S. 50, is proposed to be developed into three mixed-use communities, Easton Place and Glenborough in unincorporated Sacramento County and Westborough in Rancho Cordova, as part of the Easton Master Planned Community (Exhibit 4-1). This proposal is pending future environmental review and approval.

Land use immediately west of the project site consists of existing industrial park development along the Sunrise Boulevard corridor. West of Sunrise Boulevard, land uses are primarily office and light industrial, although housing associated with the Villages of Zinfandel and the Capital Village developments is located in this area as

well (Exhibit 4-1). Mather Field (formerly Mather Air Force Base [AFB]) is located approximately 2 miles west and southwest of the project site. After base closure, the Mather Airport Policy Area (MAPA) and Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) were developed to ensure compatibility of land uses within the runway approach pattern and in areas affected by aircraft noise (Mather Airport 1996). Current uses at Mather Field include air cargo carriers at Mather Airport, office and commercial uses at the Mather Commerce Center, Mather Regional Park, and single-family housing known as Independence at Mather. Additional commercial uses continue to be developed at Mather Field.

Lands east of the project site are undeveloped with the exception of the Teichert Grantline Quarry, which operates aggregate mining on the adjacent lands, roughly in the middle of the project site from north to south.

The Sunrise Douglas Community Plan/SunRidge Specific Plan areas are located immediately south and southeast of the project site (Exhibit 4-1). At full buildout, these areas will contain approximately 6,042 acres of mixed-use development. Development that will occur adjacent to the project site will contain mostly low-density residential units. The Security Park (an industrial park that is not part of the project site) is located in the adjacent southeastern corner. Agricultural land uses and the County (Kiefer) Landfill are located several miles southeast of the project site beyond the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan/SunRidge Specific Plan areas.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES SETTING

Within Rancho Cordova there are an estimated 12,888 acres of agricultural (vacant) land uses, and existing agricultural activities consist of small areas of row crops, grazing lands, and orchards. However, the majority of this land is considered vacant or underutilized. Most of the area's farmland consists of nonnative annual grasslands and has historically been used for dry crop farming and cattle grazing. There are no major intensive agricultural operations (although small family farm activities do exist) that occur within the southern portion of Rancho Cordova, and few crops are grown within the city itself. (City of Rancho Cordova 2005a.)

As mentioned previously, most of the project site is being used as pastureland for cattle grazing by the Clark Cattle Company. The Important Farmland map for Sacramento County designates the project site as consisting of Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Other Lands (CDC 2002). A very small area, approximately 0.1 acre (40 square feet), in the southeast corner of the project site is designated as Farmland of Local Importance, but is too small to support economically viable agricultural activities. Grazing Land is described as "Existing vegetation that is suitable for grazing." Urban and Built-Up Land is described as "Land occupied by structures with a density of at least one dwelling unit per 1.5 acres." Other Lands are described as "Land that does not meet the criteria of the remaining categories." (CDC 2004.) The project site does not contain any designated "Prime Farmland," "Farmland of Statewide Importance," or "Unique Farmland" and none of the land at the project site is held under Williamson Act contracts.

3.1.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to land use that are applicable to the proposed project or alternatives under consideration.

STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

State Planning and Zoning Laws

Government Code Section 65300 et seq. establishes the obligation of cities and counties to adopt and implement general plans. The general plan is a comprehensive, long-term, and general document that describes plans for the physical development of a city or county and of any land outside its boundaries that, in the city's or county's

judgment, bears relation to its planning. The general plan addresses a broad range of topics, including, at a minimum, land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. In addressing these topics, the general plan identifies the goals, objectives, policies, principles, standards, and plan proposals that support the city's or county's vision for the area. The general plan is a long-range document that typically addresses the physical character of an area over a 20-year period. Finally, although the general plan serves as a blueprint for future development and identifies the overall vision for the planning area, it remains general enough to allow for flexibility in the approach taken to achieve the plan's goals.

The State Zoning Law (Government Code Section 65800 et seq.) establishes that zoning ordinances, which are laws that define allowable land uses within a specific district, are required to be consistent with the general plan and any applicable specific plans. When amendments to the general plan are made, corresponding changes in the zoning ordinance may be required within a reasonable time to ensure that the land uses designated in the general plan would also be allowable by the zoning ordinance (Government Code Section 65860[c]).

Local Agency Formation Commissions

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act of 2000 (Government Code Section 56000 et seq.) establishes the process through which a local agency boundary change is made and associated planning authority is transferred from one local agency to another. The local agency formation commission (LAFCo) of each county oversees and approves such boundary changes. To encourage orderly growth, LAFCos establish a sphere of influence for each city and other local agencies. The sphere of influence is a county area that is subject to the planning influence of a city or another local agency because that agency has identified an intention to annex the area into its physical boundary and service area. The *Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission Policies, Standards, and Procedures for LAFCos*, adopted September 5, 1990, amended May 5, 1993, include policies that:

- encourage orderly development,
- encourage the logical formation and determination of boundaries,
- ensure that affected populations receive efficient governmental services, and
- guide development away from open space and prime agricultural land uses unless such actions would not promote planned orderly and efficient development.

For the project, the Sacramento County LAFCo oversees the establishment or revision of boundaries for local municipalities and independent special districts.

California Department of Education School Siting Requirements

The California Department of Education (CDE) School Facilities Planning Division (SFPD) has prepared a the *Guide to School Site Analysis and Development* (CDE 2000) that provides criteria for locating appropriate school sites in California. CDE's authority for approving proposed sites is contained in Education Code Section 17251 and in Title 5, Section 14010 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). CDE's approval is a condition for school districts to receive state funds for the acquisition of sites under the state's School Facilities Program administered by the State Allocation Board. Districts using only local funds are still encouraged to seek CDE approval for the benefits that such outside review can provide.

School site and size recommendations were changed by CDE in 2000 to reflect various changes in educational conditions, such as lowering of class sizes and use of advanced technology. The expanded use of school buildings and grounds for community and agency joint use and concern for the safety of the students and staff members also influenced the modification of the CDE recommendations.

CDE provides specific recommendations for school size in the publication *Guide to School Site Analysis and Development* (CDE 2000). This document suggests a ratio of 1:2 between buildings and land. CDE is aware that in a number of cases, primarily in urban settings, smaller sites cannot accommodate this ratio. In such cases, CDE's SFPD may approve an amount of acreage less than the recommended gross site size and building-to-grounds ratio.

Certain health and safety requirements for school site selection are governed by state regulations. The policies of the SFPD relating to the school siting criteria are discussed in detail below.

School Siting Criteria

The California Education Code contains various provisions governing the siting of new public schools (e.g., Education Code Sections 17211, 17212, and 17212.5). In addition, to help focus and manage the site selection process, CDE's School Facilities and Planning Division has developed screening and ranking procedures based on criteria commonly affecting school selection (Education Code Section 17251[b], 5 CCR Section 14001[c]). The highest priority on the criteria list is safety. Other site selection criteria require an analysis of the specific environmental constraints and land use concerns.

The Rio del Oro project designates a site for an elementary school and another site for a combined high school/ middle school facility that the Folsom-Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) would construct and operate on property to be purchased from the Phase 1 project applicant (Elliott Homes). Before a school district can obtain state funding to acquire a site for a proposed school facility, CDE must approve the site to ensure that certain minimum criteria are met (CDE 2000). FCUSD uses these criteria for locating new school sites. The criteria relevant to the project include the requirement of an analysis of environmental constraints and land use concerns.

This draft environmental impact report/draft environmental impact statement (DEIR/DEIS) only analyzes the school sites proposed for development Phase 1. Because a conceptual site plan was developed and provided by FCUSD, details of these schools were available to conduct a project-specific analysis. Other school sites are not evaluated at this level of detail because FCUSD has not developed conceptual site plans for other school sites. As conceptual site plans were developed for the remaining school sites FCUSD would prepare separate, site-specific environmental review documents for other Phase 1 schools, and for schools proposed for subsequent project phases.

The foremost consideration in the selection of school sites is safety. Certain health and safety requirements are governed by state statute and CDE regulations. In selecting a school site, a school district should consider the following factors: proximity to airports, proximity to high-voltage power transmission lines, presence of toxic and hazardous substances, hazardous air emissions, and facilities within one-quarter mile, and proximity to railroads.

Airports

The site must not be located within any aircraft accident exposure or airport safety areas. Disclosure and further investigation are required if the location of a proposed school site is within 2 miles of an airport.

Proximity to High-Voltage Power Transmission Lines

CDE's SFPD recognizes that "electric power transmission lines maintained by power companies may or may not be hazardous to human health." (See SFPD's *School Site Selection and Approval Guide* [CDE 2000].) While CDE continues to monitor research regarding the effects of electromagnetic fields on human beings, it cautions school districts to be aware of the health and safety aspects of overhead transmission lines. SFPD has established limitations in consultation with the California Department of Health Services and electric power companies.

A consultant from CDE will assist the school district in assessing each site according to its own potential hazards. However, under no circumstances should any portion of a school site be located within the following distances

from a power line easement: 100 feet from the edge of an easement for a 50- to 133-kilovolt (kV) line, 150 feet from the edge of an easement for a 220- to 230-kV line, or 350 feet from the edge of an easement for a 500- to 550-kV line (5 CCR Section 14010[c]). The figures are based on kV strengths of transmission lines used by utility companies in January 1993.

Proximity to Toxic and Hazardous Substances

Another safety concern in the school siting process is the presence of potentially toxic or hazardous substances on, or in the vicinity of, a prospective school site. School districts and their site evaluation teams should be wary of the following hazards:

- landfill areas on or adjacent to the site;
- the proximity of the site to current or former dump areas, chemical plants, oil fields, refineries, fuel storage facilities, nuclear generating plants, abandoned farms and dairies, and agricultural areas where pesticides and fertilizer have been heavily used; and
- naturally occurring hazardous materials, such as asbestos, oil, and gas.

Before receiving final site approval from CDE and funds under the School Facilities Program, school districts must follow specific statutory and regulatory procedures enacted to ensure that school sites are free from toxic and hazardous materials. A district may submit materials documenting compliance with the toxic and hazardous-substances requirements before submitting the balance of the site-approval package documents required by CDE. (See Sections 3.6, “Public Services,” and 3.13, “Hazards and Hazardous Materials,” of this DEIR/DEIS for discussion of FCUSD’s compliance with hazardous materials requirements.)

Generally, a school district must comply with the following requirements:

- A qualified consultant must be retained to investigate current and historic uses on the site. The consultant must prepare a Phase I environmental site assessment, in accordance with standards of the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM E-1527-2000).
- If the Phase I assessment demonstrates that no further investigation is required, the school district shall submit to CDE two copies of the Phase I assessment and payment for review by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). CDE will transmit the payment and the Phase I assessment to DTSC for its review and determination. If DTSC concurs with the Phase I assessment, it will issue a determination letter stating that “no action” is required related to hazardous materials.
- If the Phase I assessment demonstrates that further investigation is necessary, or if DTSC requires further investigation, the school district, in coordination with DTSC, must hire a qualified consultant to undertake a Preliminary Endangerment Assessment (PEA). DTSC will oversee and review the consultant’s work. Through soil sampling and risk assessment, a PEA must indicate whether a release of a hazardous material has occurred or will occur, or whether naturally occurring hazardous material poses a significant health risk. DTSC should approve the PEA if no hazardous materials are identified, or if identified materials do not pose a significant health risk. DTSC will then issue a determination letter stating that “no further action” is required.
- If the PEA demonstrates that there could be health risks associated with hazardous materials, DTSC may require the school district to prepare and implement a Response Action (cleanup, removal, or remediation of hazardous materials). DTSC would oversee and retain approval authority over the Response Action. Before the school district may acquire the proposed site, or begin the Response Action, it must obtain a Contingent Site Approval from CDE to ensure the site meets all other requirements for CDE approval. DTSC will issue a certification letter when a Response Action is completed.

High-Pressure Pipelines, Reservoirs, or Water Storage Tanks

CDE prohibits a school district from locating a school site near an aboveground water or fuel storage tank or within 1,500 feet of the easement of an aboveground or underground pipeline that can pose a safety hazard as determined by a risk analysis study, conducted by a competent professional, which may include certification from a local public utility commission. In addition, a proposed school site should be at least 1,500 feet from the easement of a reservoir or storage tank.

Hazardous Air Emissions and Facilities within One-Quarter Mile

A school district, in consultation with the local air pollution control district or air quality management district, must identify permitted and nonpermitted facilities, including but not limited to freeways and other busy traffic corridors, large agricultural operations, and rail yards within one-quarter mile of the proposed site that might reasonably be anticipated to emit hazardous air emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or wastes. Additional information, evaluation, and cleanup may be required if such facilities are found to be present.

Other Health Hazards

A school district shall include in an EIR or mitigated negative declaration information necessary to determine that the proposed school project is not any of the following:

- the site of a current or former hazardous waste disposal site or solid-waste disposal site, unless, if the site was a former solid-waste disposal site, the board of education concludes that the wastes have been removed;
- a hazardous-substance release site identified by DTSC; or
- the site of one or more pipelines, situated underground or aboveground, that carry hazardous substances, materials, or wastes, unless the pipeline is used only to supply natural gas to that school or neighborhood.

These written determinations, as adopted by the FCUSD school board, must be submitted to CDE as part of a site approval package. Often this information is included in the Phase I site assessment and in the certified California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document.

Other factors to consider are as follows:

- If the proposed land has been designated a border-zone property by DTSC, then a school may not be located on the site without a specific variance in writing by DTSC.
- From a nuisance standpoint the site selection committee should also consider whether a site is located near or downwind from a stockyard, fertilizer plant, soil-processing operation, auto-dismantling facility, sewage treatment plant, or other potentially hazardous facility.

Proximity to Railroad Tracks

CDE regulations provide that, when a proposed school site is within 1,500 feet of a railroad track easement, the school district must retain a “competent professional” to complete a safety study.

Flooding

Proposed school sites should not be located within the 100-year floodplain as indicated on the most recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or within flood areas as indicated on local flood maps.

Air Quality Adjacent to Busy Traffic Corridors

If a proposed school site would be within 500 feet of the edge of the closest traffic lane of a freeway or other busy traffic corridor, a health risk assessment must be performed to determine whether the health of students and staff could be at risk. The phrase "freeway or other busy traffic corridor" is defined as any roadway that, on an average day, has traffic in excess of 50,000 vehicles in a rural area or 100,000 vehicles in an urban area.

Access/Streets

CDE guidelines indicate that the proposed school site should be safely and easily accessible to residential neighborhoods by pedestrian, bus, and private-automobile traffic on publicly maintained roadways or walkways. School sites adjacent to streets with relatively high traffic volumes are typically not considered acceptable unless other safe access is available for the neighborhood.

Wetlands

CDE regulations caution school districts against selecting school sites on or near existing wetlands (5 CCR Section 14010[s][5]). Specifically, the regulations instruct school districts to consider the cost and complications associated with selecting sites characterized by "the existence of any wildlife habitat that is on a protected or endangered species list maintained by any state or federal agency, existence of any wetlands, natural waterways, or areas that may support migratory species, or evidence of any environmentally sensitive vegetation." If the selection of such a site would result in "undue delay" or "unreasonable costs consistent with State Allocation Board standards," then the school district should not pursue the site.

Land Use Plans

CDE requires an analysis to determine whether the site is adjacent to compatible land uses, and adopted general plan and zoning designations. Adjacent industrial and commercial uses are typically not considered compatible with elementary schools. A proposed school site should not be land under an existing Williamson Act contract (see "Williamson Act" below). In addition, the school site should be designated on the general, specific, and community plan land use maps as a proposed and eventually as an existing school site.

Consultation and Findings

CEQA Section 21151.8, the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Section 15186[c]), and Education Code Section 17213(b) identify environmental requirements for school projects in addition to the standard environmental analysis requirements of CEQA. These additional requirements are intended to ensure that, before a school district approves a school project at a given site, the site is evaluated to identify potential health effects that could result from exposure to hazardous materials, wastes, emissions, and substances. The school district as lead agency is required to consult with other agencies in this regard, before a school project is considered for approval.

CEQA Section 21151.2 also requires that a school district give notice, in writing, to the appropriate planning commission of its intent to acquire title to property for a new school site or an addition to an existing school site. The planning commission is requested to investigate the proposed site and submit its recommendations concerning acquisition of the site to the governing board of the school district within 30 days of receiving notice. Following the required consultation, the school district's governing board must make written findings when taking action on the proposed school project.

These requirements are set forth herein, despite the absence of a school district as lead agency under CEQA, because the project applicant(s) and the City, in identifying school sites within the Rio del Oro Specific Plan area, have tried to be cognizant of school siting requirements and criteria. The intent of analyzing the proposed Phase 1 schools was not for FCUSD to rely solely on the Rio del Oro Specific Plan EIR/EIS for project-level review of Phase 1 schools. Rather, the intent of the analysis was to identify potential issues with CDE criteria early in the

planning process and expedite FCUSD's preparation and processing of its site-specific CEQA compliance document.

Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, is designed to preserve agriculture and open-space lands by discouraging their premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. The act enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open-space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments that are much lower than normal because they are based on farming and open-space uses as opposed to full market value. None of the land at the project site is held under Williamson Act contracts.

California Important Farmland Inventory System and Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) was established by the State of California in 1982 to continue the Important Farmland mapping efforts begun in 1975 by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) (now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] of the U.S. Department of Agriculture). The intent of the SCS was to produce agricultural-resource maps based on soil quality and land use across the nation. The California Department of Conservation (CDC) sponsors the FMMP and is also responsible for establishing agricultural easements in accordance with Public Resources Code Sections 10250–10255.

As part of the nationwide agricultural-land-use mapping effort, the SCS/NRCS developed a series of definitions known as Land Inventory and Monitoring (LIM) criteria. The LIM criteria classify the land's suitability for agricultural production. Suitability includes both the physical and chemical characteristics of soils as well as the actual land use. Important Farmland maps are derived from the NRCS (formerly SCS) soil survey maps using the LIM criteria and are available by county. Important Farmland maps classify land into one of the following eight categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, Other Land, and Water. The CDC classifications in the Important Farmland Inventory System are as follows:

- **Prime Farmland—**Land that has the best combination of features for the production of agricultural crops
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance—**Land other than Prime Farmland that has a good combination of physical and chemical features for the production of agricultural crops
- **Unique Farmland—**Land of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural cash crops
- **Farmland of Local Importance—**Land that is of importance to the local agricultural economy
- **Grazing Land—**Land with existing vegetation that is suitable for grazing
- **Urban and Built-up Lands—**Land occupied by structures with a density of at least one dwelling unit per 1.5 acres
- **Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use—**Vacant areas; existing lands that have a permanent commitment to development but have an existing land use of agricultural or grazing lands
- **Other Lands—**Land that does not meet the criteria of the remaining categories (CDC 2004)

The designations for Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance are defined together under the terms "Agricultural Land" and "Important Farmland" in CEQA (Public Resources Code Sections 21060.1 and 21095 and State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G).

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

Regional

Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Sacramento Region Blueprint

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is a regional organization that provides a variety of planning functions over its six-county region, which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, Sutter, Yuba, and El Dorado Counties. SACOG's primary functions are to provide transportation planning and funding for the region and to study and support resolutions of regional issues. In 2002, SACOG initiated what is now known as the Sacramento Region Blueprint process after computer modeling of the region showed that current growth patterns and transportation investment priorities would result in significant increases in congestion over the next 50 years, as well as significant consumption of privately held natural and agricultural land. The goal of the process was to determine whether alternatives to current and planned transportation and land use patterns could be established to improve the region's long-term travel patterns and air quality, as well as retain substantially more open space. The Blueprint is the product of a 3-year public-involvement effort and is intended to guide land use and transportation choices over the next 50 years. During this 50-year period the region's population is projected to grow from 2 million to more than 3.8 million, jobs are projected to increase from 921,000 to 1.9 million, and housing units are projected to increase from 713,000 to 1.5 million.

The starting point for the Blueprint process was the "Base Case Scenario," which shows how the region would develop through the year 2050 if growth patterns of the recent past continue. Under the Base Case Scenario, growth would continue outward into largely rural areas and on the fringes of current development. The model predicted that the average resident living in a version of a future typical of the Base Case Scenario in 2050 would probably live in a single-family house on a fairly large lot in a subdivision with similar houses. This resident would commute a longer distance to work than is typical today; trips to work and commercial areas would be lengthy and slow because of significant increases in congestion.

In December 2004 the SACOG Board of Directors adopted the *Preferred Blueprint Scenario* (Exhibit 3.1-1), a vision for growth that promotes compact, mixed-use development and more transit choices as an alternative to low-density development. It includes a greater range of housing products, reinvestment in already developed areas, protection of natural-resource areas from urbanization, and more transportation choices. Residents living in a future developed area consistent with the Preferred Blueprint Scenario in 2050 would probably live in a home on a smaller lot, in a neighborhood with some larger houses and some attached row houses, apartments, and condominiums. Residents would drive to work, but the trip would be shorter than presently, and the time needed to get there would be about the same as it is now. It is anticipated that residents may sometimes use public transportation (i.e., train or bus). Most of their shopping and entertainment trips would still be via the automobile, but the distances would be shorter. Some of these shopping trips might be via walking or biking down the block a short distance to a village or town center that contains neighborhood stores with housing units built on top of them, and a small park or plaza.

The Sacramento Region Blueprint depicts a way for the region to grow through the year 2050 generally consistent with seven principles of "Smart Growth." These principles are summarized below and include a comparison of development projected under Base Case Scenario to development projected under the Preferred Blueprint Scenario. (SACOG and Valley Vision 2004.)

- **Transportation Choices:** Developments should be designed to encourage people to sometimes walk, ride bicycles, ride the bus, ride light rail, take the train, or carpool. Use of Blueprint growth concepts for land use

and right-of-way design would encourage use of these modes of travel and the remaining auto trips would be, on average, shorter. In the Base Case, 2% of new housing and 5% of new jobs would be located within walking distance of 15-minute bus or train service, the number of vehicle miles traveled per day per household would be 34.9 miles, and the total time devoted to travel per household per day would be 81 minutes. The Blueprint Scenario reduces the number of trips taken by car by about 10%. These trips are shifted to transit, walking, or biking. In the Blueprint Scenario, 38% of new homes and 41% of new jobs would be located within walking distance of 15-minute bus or train service, the number of vehicle miles traveled per day per household would be 47.2 miles, and the total time devoted to travel per household per day would be 67 minutes. With the Blueprint Scenario, per capita, there would be 14% less carbon dioxide and particulates produced by car exhaust compared to the Base Case.

- **Mixed-Use Developments:** Building homes and shops, entertainment, office, and light industrial uses near each other can encourage active, vital neighborhoods. This mixture of uses can be either in a vertical arrangement (mixed in one building) or horizontal (with a combination of uses in close proximity). These types of projects function as local activity centers where people would tend to walk or bike to destinations. Separated land uses, on the other hand, lead to the need to travel more by auto because of the distance between uses. Under the Base Case scenario, 26% of people would live in communities with a good, or balanced, mix of land uses by 2050. In the Blueprint Scenario, 53% of people would live in balanced communities.

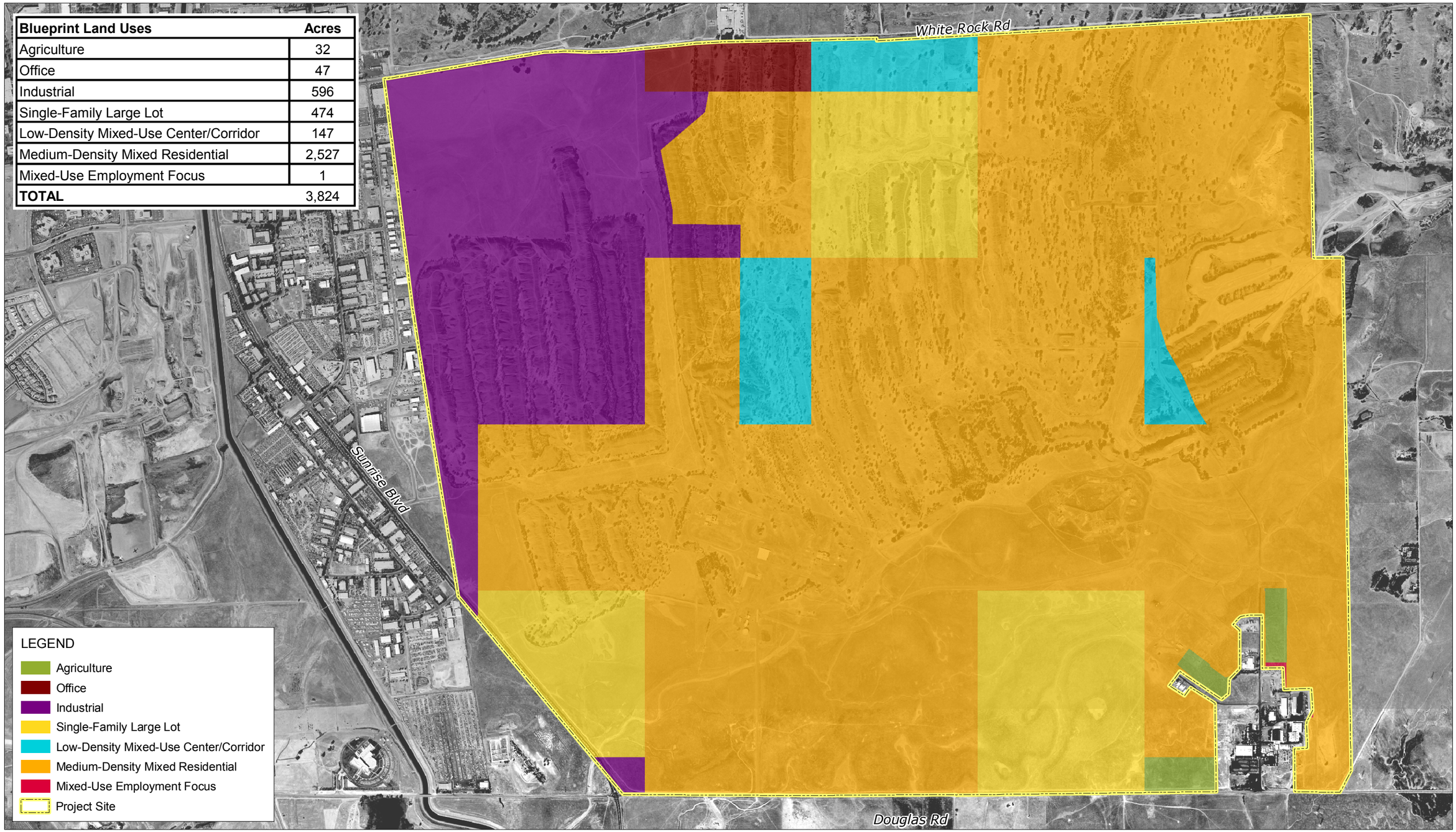
- **Compact Development:** Creating environments that are more compactly built and use space in an efficient but aesthetic manner can encourage more walking, biking, and public-transit use, and shorten auto trips. Under the Base Case, by 2050, new development would require the consumption of an additional 661 square miles of land. Under the Blueprint Scenario, 304 square miles of new land would be required for new development.

- **Housing Choice and Diversity:** Providing a variety of places where people can live—apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and single-family detached homes on varying lot sizes—creates opportunities for the variety of people who need them: families, singles, seniors, and people with special needs. This issue is of special concern for people with very low, low, and moderate incomes. By providing a diversity of housing options, more people would have a choice.

- **Use of Existing Assets:** In urbanized areas, development on infill or vacant lands, intensification of the use of underutilized parcels, or redevelopment can make better use of existing public infrastructure. This can also include rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings, denser clustering of buildings in suburban office parks, and joint use of existing public facilities such as schools and parking garages. Under the Base Case Scenario, all new development would be on vacant land. Under the Blueprint Scenario, it is suggested that 13% of all new housing and 10% of all new jobs would occur through reinvestment.

- **Quality Design:** The design details of any land use development—such as the relationship to the street, setbacks, placement of garages, sidewalks, landscaping, the aesthetics of building design, and the design of the public rights-of-way—are factors that can influence the attractiveness of living in a compact development and facilitate the ease of walking and biking to work or neighborhood services. Good site and architectural design is an important factor in creating a sense of community and a sense of place. Under the Base Case, 34% of people would live in pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Under the Blueprint Scenario, in 2050, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods would rise to 69%.

- **Natural Resources Conservation:** This principle encourages the incorporation of public-use open space (such as parks, town squares, trails, and greenbelts) within development projects, above state requirements; it also encourages wildlife and plant habitat preservation, agricultural preservation, and promotion of environmentally friendly practices such as energy efficient design, water conservation and stormwater management, and planting of shade trees. Under the Base Case, 166 square miles of agricultural land would be converted into urban uses. Under the Blueprint Scenario, 102 square miles of agricultural land would be



Blueprint Land Uses	Acres
Agriculture	32
Office	47
Industrial	596
Single-Family Large Lot	474
Low-Density Mixed-Use Center/Corridor	147
Medium-Density Mixed Residential	2,527
Mixed-Use Employment Focus	1
TOTAL	3,824

Source: SACOG 2002, Sacramento County 2002

SACOG Preferred Blueprint Scenario

EXHIBIT 3.1-1

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converted to urban uses. When the Preferred Blueprint Scenario was developed, the authors included a calculated, predetermined "preservation factor" that was intended to account for a certain amount of land that could be set aside in the future to preserve natural resources. However, the Preferred Blueprint Scenario did not attempt to map specific areas that could potentially be set aside as preserves. The only "preserve" areas that were mapped were those already designated as such that were in existence at the time the Preferred Blueprint Scenario was created.

The Preferred Blueprint Scenario predicts long-term environmental benefits from undertaking a realistic long-term planning process; these benefits are intended to minimize the extent of the inevitable physical expansion of the overall regional urban areas. In summary, if the Preferred Blueprint Scenario were followed, it would result in more mixed-use communities; provide a greater number of small-lot, single-family detached homes; develop a greater number of attached homes; reinvest in existing business and residential areas; and create more pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. The results of implementing these principles would be the protection of natural resources (because less land would be required for urban uses) and less agricultural land conversion. In addition, the Preferred Blueprint Scenario predicts less time devoted to travel, fewer car trips, and fewer miles traveled to work and local businesses compared with development under the Base Case. The reduction in traffic would improve air quality in the region by reducing carbon monoxide and particulate matter produced by car exhaust.

The Blueprint process received broad support from most of its member agencies. The Blueprint is advisory and therefore does not establish land use restrictions for the City. SACOG has no land use authority. Although it is only advisory, the Blueprint is the most authoritative policy guidance in the Sacramento region for long-term regional land use and transportation planning. A number of jurisdictions either are adopting the Blueprint concepts or are considering and encouraging projects consistent with the Blueprint. Further, the land uses in the *Rancho Cordova General Plan* (City General Plan) generally reflect the types and intensity of land uses shown in the Preferred Blueprint Scenario, which envisions relatively higher overall residential densities than currently in place (Exhibit 3.1-1). While not establishing "buildout targets," this land use scenario anticipates the addition of approximately 54,000–60,000 new households and 48,000 new jobs in the current Rancho Cordova city limits (based on assumptions used in the Blueprint process), with possible additional growth in the City's Planning Areas.

Mather Airport Policy Area and Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Mather Airport (formerly Mather AFB) has been open as a public-use air cargo and general aviation airport since May 5, 1995. Managed by the County Department of Airports, the airport consists of two primary runways, one 11,300 feet long and the other 6,100 feet long, generally aligned in a northeast-to-southwest direction. Mather Airport is a joint-use facility, supporting both military and commercial operations, and is rapidly developing as an air cargo depot. The airport includes approximately 40 acres of exclusive air cargo ramp space.

The County has initiated a master plan for Mather Airport to identify the facilities necessary to meet near- and long-term aviation demands. The master plan is intended to assist the County in preparing for the challenges and opportunities associated with growth in aviation activity, trends and factors affecting the air cargo market, potential benefits to and effects on the community, and community desires for economic generation. (Leigh Fischer Associates 2003.) The draft final *Mather Airport Master Plan* is currently undergoing environmental review by the County Department of Environmental Review and Assessment. No timeframe has been identified for approval of the master plan.

Portions of development Phase 1 are within the MAPA and the Mather Airport CLUP. The MAPA was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 1997. New noise contours for the MAPA were developed in 2004, and the County Board of Supervisors has adopted these contours for planning purposes only. The new noise contours will be included in a future update to the CLUP. The MAPA provides policy for compatible land uses near airports and, in conjunction with regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Aeronautics, clear zones and safety zones have been established for public airports. The MAPA was established to increase awareness in future residential communities of potential

aircraft noise exposure, limit the potential conflict between existing communities, and protect future airport development and operational flexibility beyond that provided in the CLUP.

The 2002 *California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook* (Caltrans 2002) is the guiding document for establishing, preparing, and modifying local airport land use compatibility plans (ALUCPs) (formerly known as CLUPs) and their policies and procedures. ALUCP policies are intended to increase the awareness of residents, in any future residential communities that are approved, of their possible exposure to aircraft operations; to limit the potential for conflict between the airport and adjacent communities; and to protect future airport development and aircraft operations. SACOG serves as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. It is responsible for developing and maintaining ALUCPs to protect public health and safety and ensure compatible land uses in the areas around each airport.

Following the 1988 closure of Mather AFB, Sacramento County adopted a reuse plan for Mather Airport in fall 1991. The Mather Airport CLUP was subsequently adopted by the ALUC in May 1997. In general, land uses within the CLUP zones are restricted to agricultural, mining, and industrial. The MAPA prohibits new residential development in those areas subject to noise levels of 65 decibels (dB) community noise equivalent level (CNEL) or above (Leigh Fischer Associates 2003). In addition, the CLUP requires additional insulation measures for home construction within the MAPA, but outside the 60-db CNEL noise contour; a disclosure in the public report to new homebuyers of property within these areas that they are located within the MAPA; and the granting of an aviation easement for all properties located within the MAPA. The MAPA is intended to promote community safety and to allow growth of Mather Airport as an air cargo facility. None of the CLUP zones would affect off-airport areas planned for residential, commercial, and office use (Leigh Fischer Associates 2003). An update to the Mather Airport CLUP (now known as ALUCP) was planned to begin in 2005; however, in January 2005, the SACOG Housing & Land Use Committee determined that the update of the ALUCP for Mather Airport would not go forward because the environmental review process has not been completed for its master plan (SACOG 2005).

County of Sacramento

Sacramento County Local Agency Formation Commission

The project would require approval of annexation by the Sacramento County LAFCo to the service area of the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) and County Sanitation District No. 1 (CSD-1) prior to service. The broad goals of the County LAFCo include ensuring the orderly formation of local governmental agencies, preserving agricultural and open-space lands, and discouraging urban sprawl. Commissions must, by law, create municipal-service reviews and update spheres of influence for each independent local governmental jurisdiction within their countywide jurisdiction. The County LAFCo has adopted the following policies and guidelines for approval of annexation:

- Consider favorably proposals that result in the provision of urban services in densely developed and populated areas.
- Consider favorably proposals that will provide urban services in areas with high growth potential rather than in areas with limited potential for future growth.
- Assess the environmental consequences of its [LAFCo's] actions and decisions (required by CEQA), and take actions to avoid or minimize a project's adverse environmental impacts if feasible, or approve a project despite significant effects because it finds overriding considerations exist. To comply with CEQA, LAFCo will take one or more of the following actions:
    - approve a project (at its discretion) without changes if environmental impacts are insignificant;
    - require an applicant to modify a project;

- establish mitigation measures as a condition of its approval of the proposal;
- deny the proposal because of unacceptable adverse environmental impacts;
- approve the project despite its significant effects by making findings of overriding concern;
- consider favorably those applications that do not shift the cost for services and infrastructure benefits to other service areas;
- consider favorably those applications that improve the balance between jobs and housing; and
- encourage the use of service providers that are governed by the citizens.

► Community needs are met most efficiently and effectively by governmental agencies which:

- are already in existence,
- are capable of coordinating service delivery over a relatively large area, and
- provide more than one type of service to the territory that they serve.

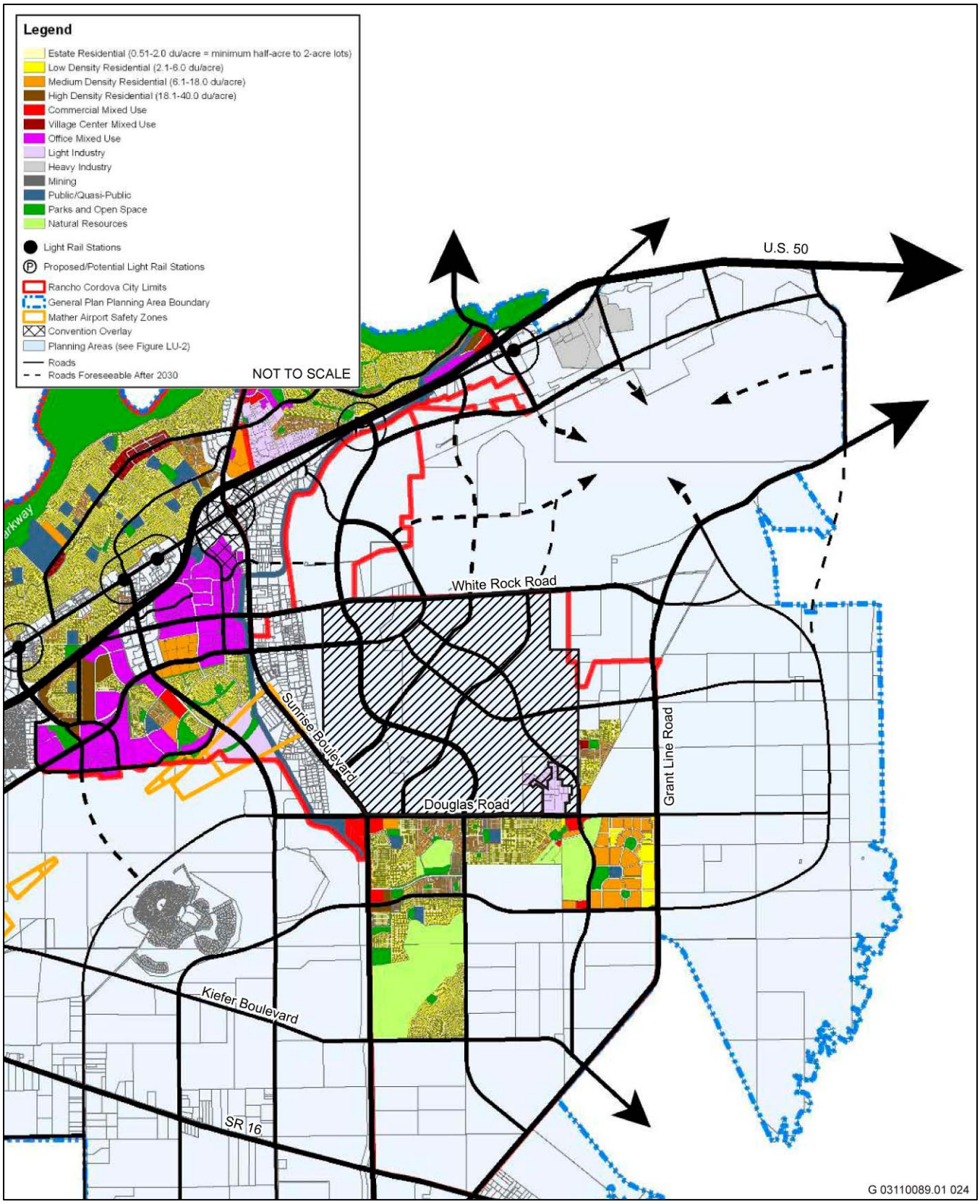
Proposed South Sacramento County Habitat Conservation Plan

The project site is located within the proposed South Sacramento County Habitat Conservation Plan (SSCHCP) area. The SSCHCP is intended to provide a regional approach to issues related to urban-development habitat conservation, agricultural production, and open-space planning. The SSCHCP would provide strategies to conserve habitat for nine special-status plants and 42 special-status wildlife species. If adopted, it would serve as a multispecies, multihabitat conservation plan addressing the biological impacts of future urban development within the USB in the southern portion of Sacramento County. To mitigate impacts, land developers that convert habitat within the USB would pay a defined per-acre fee, which would be used to protect, restore, maintain, and monitor habitat. The process for developing the SSCHCP was initiated in 1992. The SSCHCP is not scheduled for completion and implementation until sometime after the beginning of 2007.

Rancho Cordova General Plan

The land use planning and zoning authority of local jurisdictions in California is set forth in the state's planning laws. The project site is under the planning jurisdiction of the City of Rancho Cordova.

Rancho Cordova officially became a city under the laws of the State of California on July 1, 2003. Upon incorporation, the City adopted applicable portions of the County's general plan and zoning ordinance, as well as applicable community and specific plans, and zoning designations in areas within the newly incorporated city. On June 26, 2006**,** the City Council adopted the City General Plan. Planning Areas (areas that are described in the City General Plan Land Use Element and designated in the Land Use Map) are described below and shown in Exhibit 3.1-2. Detailed planning efforts (e.g., specific plans or similar planning tools) would be required for implementation of the Planning Areas. Table 3.1-1 provides definitions of current land use designations and provides the definitions and compatible uses as defined by the City General Plan for the project site and adjacent lands. Table 3.1-2 presents the proposed Rio del Oro Specific Plan land use and zoning designations and states whether those proposed designations would be compatible with City General Plan and zoning designations. As noted in Table 3.1-2, the proposed Rio del Oro Specific Plan land use and zoning designations are consistent with the City General Plan and zoning designations and would be incorporated into the Final Land Use Map after adoption of the Rio del Oro Specific Plan.



Source: City of Rancho Cordova 2006

City of Rancho Cordova General Plan Land Use Map

EXHIBIT 3.1-2

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Table 3.1-1 Rancho Cordova General Plan Land Use Designations for the Project Site and Adjacent Lands		
Land Use Designation	Definition	Compatible Uses
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Densities of 2.1–6.0 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). The Low Density Residential category represents the traditional single-family neighborhood with a majority of single-family detached homes. This is the predominant land use category of the City's neighborhoods.	Single-family detached homes in traditional neighborhoods.
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Densities of 6.1–18.0 du/ac. The Medium Density Residential category is generally characterized by small-lot single-family detached, single-family attached. Medium Density development is often found as part of a village development.	Small apartment complexes, condominiums, town homes, brownstone developments.
High Density Residential (HDR)	Densities of 18.1–40.0 du/ac. This is the most urban residential category available. The predominant style of development is larger multifamily housing complexes. Parking for these facilities is provided in traditional surface lots located all around the complex. At higher densities, parking may be found in some form of structure or underground option.	Apartments, condominiums, or clustered single-family, generally in multistory configurations.
Commercial Mixed-Use (CMU)	Densities of 2.1–18.0 du/ac. The Commercial Mixed-Use category encourages the integration of retail and service commercial uses with office and/or residential uses. In mixed-use projects, commercial use is the predominant use on the ground floor. Parking for mixed-use projects may be combined or separated, depending on the characteristics of the project.	Gas stations, restaurants, retail, shopping centers; office and residential uses would be allowed on up to 50% of a site.
Office Mixed-Use (OMU)	Densities of 2.1–18.0 du/ac. The Office Mixed-Use category encourages the integration of commercial and/or residential use in conjunction with office use of a site. In any case, office uses are the predominant use, but others may be included in a vertical or horizontal configuration.	A site may be developed with an office building that is three or four stories but where the ground floor is occupied by one or more retail and restaurant uses.
Light Industrial (LI)	Generally includes industrial or manufacturing activities that occur entirely within a closed building.	Warehousing activities or distribution centers, not including corporation yards; employee intensive operations (i.e., research and development).
Heavy Industrial (HI)	Generally characterized by industrial or manufacturing activities that may occur inside or outside of an enclosed building.	Industrial yard uses, manufacturing and fabrication, processing and assembly, storage and warehouse, surface mining, and related activities.

Table 3.1-1
Rancho Cordova General Plan Land Use Designations for the Project Site and Adjacent Lands

Land Use Designation	Definition	Compatible Uses
Village Center (VC)	Densities of 6.1–18 du/ac and parcel sizes of 5–15 ac. The Village Center category provides daily shopping needs to residents within a village as described in the City's building blocks concept. This category also allows for the integration of office and/or residential use in conjunction with the predominant commercial uses of the site. Development is pedestrian friendly and oriented toward the street.	Retail, office, and professional uses that serve daily shopping needs of nearby residents, such as small to medium sized grocery stores, supermarkets, drugstores, restaurants, and services.
Local Town Center (LTC)	Densities of 6.1–18 du/ac and parcel sizes of 15–30 ac. The Local Town Center category provides retail services, restaurants, entertainment services, and medium- and high-density residential uses within a district as described in the City's building block concept. Development is pedestrian friendly with gathering places for both daytime and nighttime activities.	Large retail stores, general retail, restaurant, office, lodging, entertainment, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, and residential uses.
Regional Town Center (RTC)	Densities of 6.1–40.0 du/ac and parcel sizes of 25–100 ac. The Regional Town Center category is generally characterized by a horizontal or vertical mix of integrated retail, office, and residential uses that serve both the entire city and the region, with population bases of at least 100,000 people. Regional town centers are vibrant destination places for the entire region and foster an active nightlife.	Large retail stores, anchoring retail centers, entertainment, restaurants, lodging, conference centers, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, arts/cultural centers, and business and professional offices.
Public/Quasi Public (P/QP)	Lands owned by the City of Rancho Cordova and other public agencies for a variety of public and other land uses. Most buildings in this category are high profile and prominent within the community.	Schools, colleges, and universities; churches, synagogues, temples, and other places of worship; hospitals; and cemeteries.
Parks and Open Space (P/OS)	Land within the Parks and Open Space category is designed to be used for both active and passive recreational activities. This designation includes public parks and other public facilities owned by the Cordova Recreation and Park District. Public open space lands will be administered by the City, but may be held in either public or private ownership.	Lakes, trails, golf courses, and similar uses and commercial recreation facilities principally oriented to outdoor uses. Land within this category may also be used for detention basins, creekways, and other more passive uses when colocated next to active recreational uses or when open spaces serve two uses, such as a ball field in summer and a detention basin in winter.
Natural Resources (NR)	Land within the Natural Resources category is set aside as natural habitat and typically has no urban development on it and public access is prohibited. Often, open space trails will be sited adjacent to Natural Resource areas.	Wetland preserve, bike and equestrian trails.

Note: du/ac = dwelling units per acre
sf = square feet
Source: City of Rancho Cordova 2006

Table 3.1-2
Proposed Rio del Oro Specific Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations

Proposed Land Use Designations	Proposed Zoning Designations	Specific Plan Definition	Project Uses	Consistency with City General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations
Single Family Residential	SF	Densities of 2.1–6.0 du/ac. The size and type of lots anticipated would range from one half-acre executive lots to moderate-sized lots with half-plexes and second units.	Single-family detached homes on large lots in traditional neighborhoods, half-plexes, or second units.	Yes Proposed residential densities and project uses are consistent with the City General Plan's Low Density Residential land use designation, which is defined as traditional single-family neighborhoods with a majority of single-family detached homes at densities of 2.1–6.0 du/ac.
Medium Density Residential	MDR	Densities of 6.1–18.0 du/ac. This category would provide a variety of housing types to create for-sale housing at levels attainable to area residents and workers.	Small-lot single-family detached or single-family attached (i.e., condominium- or townhome-type) development.	Yes Proposed residential densities and project uses are consistent with the City General Plan's Medium Density Residential land use designation, which is defined as small-lot single-family detached, single-family attached at densities of 6.1–18.0 du/ac.
High Density Residential	HDR	Densities of 18.1+ to 40.0 du/ac. The High Density Residential category would place housing within the Village Center and near commercial mixed-uses. Development would promote alternative transportation through close proximity to goods and services.	Apartments; condominiums; and clustered, multistory single-family residential.	Yes Proposed residential densities and project uses are consistent with the City General Plan's High Density Residential land use designation, which is defined as larger multifamily housing complexes at densities of 18.1–40.0 du/ac.
Village Commercial	VC	The Village Commercial category would serve as neighborhood centers adjacent to higher density uses and greenways. This category would allow for high-density residential uses.	Limited commercial uses and high-density residential.	Yes Proposed project uses are consistent with the City General Plan's Village Center land use designation, which is defined as office and/or residential uses in conjunction with commercial uses, such as small- to medium-sized grocery stores, supermarkets, drugstores, and restaurants.
Local Town Center	LTC	The Local Town Center would provide a variety of community and neighborhood commercial and office uses within the Village Core and adjacent to community parks and other public uses.	Mix of retail and office uses.	Yes Proposed project uses are consistent with the City General Plan's Local Town Center land use designation, which is defined as retail services, restaurants, entertainment services, and medium- and high-density residential uses.

Table 3.1-2
Proposed Rio del Oro Specific Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations

Proposed Land Use Designations	Proposed Zoning Designations	Specific Plan Definition	Project Uses	Consistency with City General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations
Regional Town Center	RTC	The Regional Town Center would be intended to serve Rancho Cordova and the surrounding areas. This category would include a mix of integrated retail and office uses connected and adjacent to recreational uses.	Retail, commercial, office, and professional services.	Yes Proposed project uses are consistent with the City General Plan's Regional Town Center land use designation, which is defined as a mix of retail, office, and residential uses that serve both the entire City and the region.
Business Professional	BP	This land use category would encourage commercial use in conjunction with office use. These uses would be connected with the Town Center in proximity to employment land uses and a designated transit center to encourage the ability of workers to use alternative transportation.	Large employment centers, and small professional offices and services.	Yes Proposed project uses are consistent within the broader City General Plan's Office Mixed-Use land use designation, which is defined as commercial and/or residential uses in conjunction with predominantly office uses.
Industrial Park	MP	Generally includes industrial or manufacturing activities that would not be noise sensitive, and would occur inside or outside of an enclosed building.	Manufacturing, assembly, and other moderate to heavy industrial uses.	Yes Proposed project uses are consistent within the broader City General Plan's Heavy Industrial land use designation, which is defined as industrial or manufacturing activities that may occur inside or outside of an enclosed building.
Schools	HS, MS, and ES. Underlying zone of SF	School uses would consist of sites designated for construction of a joint high school/middle school, a middle school, and elementary schools. The sites are sized in accordance with the Folsom-Cordova Unified School District criteria. These sites have been given an underlying zone of SF and would be converted to single-family residential if the school district determines the sites are not needed.	High school, middle schools, and elementary schools.	Yes School uses would be consistent within the broader City General Plan's Public/Quasi Public land use designation, which is defined as lands owned by the City of Rancho Cordova and other public agencies for a variety of public and other land uses.

Table 3.1-2
Proposed Rio del Oro Specific Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations

Proposed Land Use Designations	Proposed Zoning Designations	Specific Plan Definition	Project Uses	Consistency with City General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations
Public/Quasi Public	P/QP	Public and Quasi Public land uses would be located in the Village Core and anticipated to accommodate a number of public uses that would support the Village Core.	Day care, transit centers, library, and post office.	Yes Proposed Public and Quasi Public land uses would be consistent with the City General Plan's Public/Quasi Public land use designation, which is defined as lands owned by the City of Rancho Cordova and other public agencies for a variety of public and other land uses.
Parks	Park	This category includes community parks and neighborhood parks. These parks are intended to be easily accessible and focal points in the community.	Ball fields, tennis courts, soccer fields, basketball courts, picnic and playground areas, and community gathering facilities.	Yes Park uses would be consistent with the City General Plan's Parks/Open Space land use designation, which is defines as land designed to be used for both active and passive recreational activities, and includes public parks and other public facilities owned by the Cordova Recreation and Park District, and administered by the City, but may be held in either public or private ownership.
Private Recreation	PR	Private Recreation would include the area of the project site that has surface soil contamination resulting from prior uses. Limited land uses are proposed which do not require buildings or structures with significant foundations.	Golf course, driving range, skate park, or other non-public uses.	Yes Private Recreation uses would be consistent with the City General Plan's Parks/Open Space land use designation, which is defines as land designed to be used for both active and passive recreational activities, and includes public parks and other public facilities owned by the Cordova Recreation and Park District, and administered by the City, but may be held in either public or private ownership.
Open Space	OS, SWD, WP, DP, OS/P, LC. GB, ROW	This category applies to open space preserves, wetland/mitigation preserves, drainage parkways, and greenways.	Passive recreation, preserves, floodwater conveyance and retention, stormwater quality treatment, resource mitigation, and interface between land uses and plan area boundaries.	Yes Open Space uses would be consistent with the City General Plan's Parks/Open Space land use designation, which is defines as land designed to be used for both active and passive recreational activities, and includes public parks and other public facilities owned by the Cordova Recreation and Park District, and administered by the City, but may be held in either public or private ownership. In addition, Open Space uses would be consistent with the City General Plan's Natural Resource land use designation, which includes lands set aside as natural habitat and typically has no urban development.

Source: City of Rancho Cordova 2006

The City's General Plan Land Use Map designates the project site as the Rio del Oro Planning Area. The SunRidge Community Plan Area is identified on the map to the south of the project site. Land use designations adjacent to the project site in this Planning Area include Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Commercial Mixed Use. The Land Use Map identifies the land immediately north of the project site, on the north side of White Rock Road, as the Aerojet Planning Area, which will continue to be used for aerospace facilities and associated buffer lands. The area approximately 1 mile northwest of the project site is designated as the Westborough Planning Area, and the area approximately 1 mile northeast of the project site is designated as the Glenborough Planning Area. Both of these areas contain a mix of land uses including residential, commercial, and office.

The area west of the project site is designated as the Sunrise Boulevard South Planning Area, which includes the existing industrial park designated as Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial. The Grantline West Planning Area is located between the northeastern project site boundary and Grant Line Road in an area currently used for aggregate mining. The Easton Planning Area is outside the existing city limits on the east side of Grant Line Road. Land uses in this area are projected to include Low Density Residential, Village Centers, a Local Town Center, Light Industrial, Office Mixed Use, and a regional natural or recreational center.

Goals and policies from the City General Plan relating to land use that the City has found to be applicable to the proposed project and alternatives under consideration are provided in Appendix F.

3.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a land use and agricultural resources impact is considered significant if implementation of the proposed project or alternatives under consideration would do any of the following:

- conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect;
- physically divide an established community;
- convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use; or
- involve other changes in the existing environment that, because of their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The focus of this land use analysis is on land use impacts, including those related to agricultural resources, that would result from project implementation. Evaluation of potential land use impacts of the project was based on a review of the planning documents pertaining to the project study area, including the Land Use Element in the City General Plan, City Zoning Ordinance, the Mather Airport CLUP, the proposed SSCHCP, the CDC Important Farmland Map for Sacramento County, the CDE school siting criteria, field review, and consultation with appropriate agencies.

None of the land at the project site is held under Williamson Act contracts; therefore, the project would not conflict with existing Williamson Act contracts. There are no residences located on the project site, and the project would not physically divide an established community. Because the project would have no impact related to these two thresholds, they are not discussed further in this section. Specific impacts associated with other

resource and issue areas are addressed in each technical section of this DEIR/DEIS as appropriate. These technical sections provide a detailed analysis of other relevant environmental effects as a result of project development. Project consistency with the City General Plan is presented in Appendix F.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

The project would be consistent with the City General Plan and zoning designations. Based on the results of remedial investigations conducted to date at the project site, DTSC may, where appropriate, place limits on future land uses through deed restrictions and easements on conveyances, and use restrictions on leases. If minor modifications to the land uses currently identified in the land use plans would be required based on future DTSC findings, the Rio del Oro Specific Plan would be amended as necessary.

The project site is located within the proposed SSCHCP area. The draft SSCHCP is expected to be completed in early 2007, but an adoption date is not currently set. Therefore, this plan is not applicable to the project because it has not been adopted.

Program Level Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Effects that would occur under each alternative development scenario are identified as follows: PP (Proposed Project), HD (High Density), IM (Impact Minimization), NF (No Federal Action), and NP (No Project). The impacts for each alternative are compared relative to the PP at the end of each impact conclusion (i.e., similar, greater, lesser).

IMPACT 3.1-1	Consistency with Sacramento County LAFCo Guidelines for Annexation of the Project Site to SRCSD and CSD-1. *Annexation of the project site into the service area of SRCSD and CSD-1 would require approval by the County LAFCo before these districts could provide wastewater service to the project.*
PP, HD, IM, NF	The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act of 2000 (Government Code Section 56000 et seq.) establishes the process through which a local agency boundary change is made and associated planning authority is transferred from one local agency to another. For the project, the Sacramento County LAFCo oversees the establishment or revision of boundaries for local municipalities and independent special districts, such as SRCSD and CSD-1. The current SRCSD/CSD-1 sphere of influence and service area within Sacramento County was approved by the County LAFCo in 1998, with minor annexations adding to the service area since that time. Before SRCSD and CSD-1 could serve the project, the County LAFCo would need to conduct proceedings to consider an amendment to the sphere of influence based on consistency with LAFCo guidelines, and annexation of the territory into SRCSD. The project would generally be consistent with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act and the County LAFCo Guidelines. The project would not convert areas designated as Important Farmland by FMMP. The Land Use Map in the City General Plan designates the project site as mixed-use development and the site was zoned by the County for urban development for decades before incorporation of the City. Before the incorporation of Rancho Cordova, a portion of the project site was included within the County USB and a portion of the site was included in the County's Urban Policy Area. These previous County land use decisions made the entire site a logical extension of the Urban Policy Area. Additionally, the project site and adjacent areas have been previously designated for urban development under various adopted plans and zoning ordinances. Thus, development of the project is the logical extension of existing and planned urban areas of the city. This impact would be considered **direct** and **less than significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. (Refer to Section 3.5, "Utilities and Service Systems," for impacts associated with the provision of wastewater service.) ***[Similar]***

NP

Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. Mining activities would not, however, require annexation into SRCSD/CSD-1 because no development would occur.

Because no development would occur under the No Project Alternative, annexation into SRCSD/CSD-1 would be unnecessary; thus, **no direct** or **indirect** impacts would occur. ***[Lesser]***

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation measures are required.

IMPACT 3.1-2

Compatibility with the Mather Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. *The Mather Airport CLUP prohibits new residential development in those areas subject to noise levels of 65 db CNEL or above.*

PP, HD, IM, NF

New noise contours for the MAPA were developed in 2004, and the County Board of Supervisors has adopted these contours for planning purposes only. The new noise contours will be included in a future update to the CLUP. The City and the Sacramento County Airport System provided the project applicant(s) with these noise contours, which would allow the development to take place based on an updated ALUCP (SACOG 2005).

The Mather Airport CLUP prohibits new residential development in those areas subject to noise levels of 65 dB CNEL or above. In addition, this policy statement requires additional measures for home construction within the MAPA, but outside the 60-db CNEL noise contour. The proposed land use plans were designed based on new noise contours, and no project-related residential development would occur within the 60-db CNEL or above noise contours. Rather, the project would develop industrial parks, business parks, and local town centers in such areas. These land uses, which include large employment centers, light manufacturing, moderate to heavy industrial, and professional offices, are considered compatible uses according to the current CLUP. Additional compatible uses in the 60- to 65-db CNEL contour range include a regional town center, open space, and parks. All land uses proposed within the 60-db CNEL or above noise contours are compatible with the current CLUP (Mather Airport 1996). Although the ALUC would base its review on the current CLUP, the City could determine that the adopted interim noise contour provides an acceptable basis for overriding the ALUC's review (SACOG 2005). Because the project would not conflict with the Mather Airport CLUP or future ALUCP, this impact is considered **direct** and **less than significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. Refer to Section 3.16, "Noise," for further discussion of noise impacts related to the Mather Airport CLUP. ***[Similar]***

NP

Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. Mining activities, however, would be consistent with the site's existing zoning for industrial land use, and would be an approved land use within the 65-db CNEL noise contour under the Mather Airport CLUP.

Because no development would occur under the No Project Alternative, there would be no development within the 60- or 65-db CNEL contours; thus, **no direct** or **indirect impacts** would occur. ***[Lesser]***

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation measures are required.

IMPACT 3.1-3	Conflict with the SACOG Sacramento Region Blueprint. *Project implementation could result in conflicts between the project and the SACOG Sacramento Region Preferred Blueprint Scenario.*

PP, HD

The Proposed Project and High Density Alternatives more closely reflect the concept of Smart Growth, as defined by SACOG and by the City in the General Plan, and therefore, would not conflict with the SACOG Blueprint. **No direct** or **indirect** impacts would occur. ***[Lesser]***

IM

Project implementation could result in conflicts between the project and the SACOG Sacramento Region Preferred Blueprint Scenario. The types of land uses under the Impact Minimization Alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Project Alternative. However, the Impact Minimization Alternative would provide a higher level of protection of natural resource areas, 2,823 fewer single-family homes, 32 more medium-density homes, and 1,750 more high-density homes (i.e., attached row houses, apartments, and condominiums) than the Proposed Project Alternative. Under the Impact Minimization Alternative, project components would be reconfigured on the project site in such a way as to avoid and/or reduce impacts on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional wetlands and high-quality biological habitat.

The protection of natural resources would decrease the total amount of residential development by approximately 430 acres, and the density would be reduced such that approximately 1,040 fewer residential units would be constructed. The commercial and industrial development sites would be reduced by approximately 30 acres, and thus the total square footage of commercial and industrial space available for use would be reduced by approximately 400,000 square feet.

As shown in Exhibit 3.1-1, the Blueprint envisions a higher density of development on the project site than proposed under the Impact Minimization Alternative. Although low density on a particular property may reduce the levels of impacts occurring on or emanating from the property, low densities can be considered an inefficient use of finite land resources. In areas with growing populations, low-density development can result in market demand for development being pushed outward toward other areas on the urban periphery, with the long-term consequence of more overall loss of habitat, open space, and farmland. Therefore, this **direct** impact is considered **significant**.

Based on SACOG Blueprint principles, development under the Impact Minimization Alternative could potentially result in future conversion of agricultural land and less protection of natural resources over the long term in the greater Sacramento region because more land would be required for expansion of the overall regional urban areas. Such new development, as proposed under the Impact Minimization Alternative, would be required to comply with the policies of the local jurisdictions. In addition, impacts of these projects would undergo separate environmental review to identify potential impacts and mitigation measures. As such, it cannot be expected that future development would result in less-than-significant impacts; therefore, indirect impacts must be assumed to be **potentially significant**. ***[Greater]***

NF

Project implementation could result in conflicts between the project and the SACOG Sacramento Region Preferred Blueprint Scenario. The types of land uses under the No Federal Action Alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Project Alternative. However, the No Federal Action Alternative would provide a higher level of protection of natural resource areas, 600 fewer single-family homes, 216 fewer medium-density homes, and 20 fewer high-density homes (i.e., attached row houses, apartments, and condominiums) than the Proposed Project Alternative. Under the No Federal Action Alternative, project components would be reconfigured on the project site in such a way as to avoid impacts on jurisdictional wetland features.

The protection of natural resources would decrease the total amount of residential development by approximately 150 acres, and the density would be reduced such that approximately 836 fewer residential units would be constructed. The commercial and industrial development sites would be reduced by approximately 90 acres.

As shown in Exhibit 3.1-1, the Blueprint envisions a higher density of development on the project site than proposed under the No Federal Action Alternative. Although low density on a particular property may reduce the levels of impacts occurring on or emanating from the property, low densities can be considered an inefficient use of finite land resources. In areas with growing populations, low-density development can result in market demand for development being pushed outward toward other areas on the urban periphery, with the long-term consequence of more overall loss of habitat, open space, and farmland. Therefore, this **direct** impact is considered **significant**.

Based on SACOG Blueprint principles, development under the No Federal Action Alternative could potentially result in future conversion of agricultural land and less protection of natural resources over the long term in the greater Sacramento region because more land would be required for expansion of the overall regional urban areas. Such new development, as proposed under the No Federal Action Alternative, would be required to comply with the policies of the local jurisdictions. In addition, impacts of these projects would undergo separate environmental review to identify potential impacts and mitigation measures. As such, it cannot be expected that future development would result in less-than-significant impacts; therefore, indirect impacts must be assumed to be **potentially significant**. ***[Greater]***

NP

Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. As shown in Exhibit 3.1-1, the Blueprint envisions the project site for development to urban uses.

Because no urban development would occur under the No Project Alternative, this alternative would be inconsistent with the SACOG Preferred Blueprint Scenario. Therefore, this impact is considered **direct** and **significant**.

Based on SACOG Blueprint principles, development under the No Project Alternative could potentially result in future conversion of agricultural land and less protection of natural resources over the long term in the greater Sacramento region because more land would be required for expansion of the overall regional urban areas. Such new development, like the project, would be required to comply with the policies of the local jurisdictions. In addition, impacts of these projects would undergo separate environmental review to identify potential impacts and mitigation measures. As such, it cannot be expected that future development would result in less-than-significant impacts; therefore, **indirect** impacts must be assumed to be **potentially significant**. ***[Greater]***

Mitigation Measure: No feasible mitigation measures are available.

IM, NF, NP

No feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the conflict between the Impact Minimization, No Federal Action, and No Project Alternatives and the SACOG Preferred Blueprint Scenario to a less-than-significant level. The City would determine whether conflicts between the Impact Minimization, No Federal Action, and No Project Alternatives and Blueprint policies and assumptions may translate into potentially significant environmental effects. In determining whether any particular conflict translates into such an effect, the City would carefully consider whether implementation of the Impact Minimization, No Federal Action, or

No Project Alternative, compared with implementation of a Blueprint-based plan, would yield either a lost opportunity to accomplish a long-term environmental benefit, or a lost opportunity to minimize a long-term environmental impact (Public Resources Code Section 21001[g]). Therefore, this impact remains **significant and unavoidable**.

PP, HD — No mitigation measures are required.

Project Level (Phase 1) Impacts and Mitigation Measures

IMPACT 3.1-4

Compatibility with Sacramento County LAFCo Guidelines for Annexation of the Project Site to SRCSD and CSD-1. *Annexation of the Phase 1 development area into the service area of SRCSD and CSD-1 would require approval by the County LAFCo before these districts could provide wastewater service to the project.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.1-1 for further discussion of this impact.

IMPACT 3.1-5

Consistency with the Mather Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. *The Mather Airport CLUP prohibits new residential development in those areas subject to noise levels of 65 dB CNEL or above.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.1-2 for further discussion of this impact.

IMPACT 3.1-6

Conflict with the SACOG Sacramento Region Blueprint. *Implementation of development Phase 1 could result in conflicts between the project and the SACOG Sacramento Region Preferred Blueprint Scenario.*

Impacts would be the same under Phase 1 as under the program (entire project site) level analysis for all alternatives. Refer to Impact 3.1-3 for further discussion of this impact.

For the same reasons as described for Impact 3.1-3 above, no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce Impact 3.1-6 to a less-than-significant level under the Impact Minimization, No Federal Action, and No Project Alternatives. Refer to the mitigation discussion for Impact 3.1-3 for further discussion. This impact remains **significant and unavoidable** under the Impact Minimization, No Federal Action, and No Project Alternatives. No mitigation measures are required for the Proposed Project Alternative or the High Density Alternative.

IMPACT 3.1-7

Potential Land Use Conflict with California Department of Education Minimum Site Criteria for Siting the Proposed Elementary School. *A combined elementary school is proposed as part of development Phase 1. CDE minimum site criteria identify various factors that must be considered in selecting a school site to protect the health and safety of students and staff. Aggregate mining operations adjacent to the site and other factors may require additional assessment based on CDE's evaluation of the minimum site criteria.*

PP, HD, IM, NF — FCUSD would construct and operate an elementary school facility on property to be purchased from the Phase 1 project applicant (Elliott Homes). The following impact analysis broadly applies the CDE minimum siting criteria described above in the "Regulatory Framework" section to the proposed school site and identifies the location of additional information in this DEIR/DEIS.

Airports

Mather Airport is generally 2 miles from the proposed elementary school site. The project applicant(s) have agreed to ensure that the school site is outside the 2-mile radius from the end of the runway (Mayer, pers. comm., 2005). According to the Mather Airport CLUP, the proposed school site is outside of the 60-dB CNEL or above noise contours.

Proximity to High-Voltage Power Transmission Lines

A 12-kV Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) substation is approximately 3 miles northeast of the proposed elementary school site. The new on-site electrical service lines that would be less than 69 kV would be routed underground within the rights-of-way of project site streets. Existing aboveground electrical lines would be placed underground during construction of new facilities. Therefore, the proposed school site would not be in proximity to high-voltage power transmission lines.

Proximity to Toxic and Hazardous Substances

The proposed school site would potentially be in proximity to toxic and hazardous substances. The site is in an area referred to as the Excluded Area, which encompasses approximately 1,100 acres immediately west of the Inactive Rancho Cordova Test Site (IRCTS). The Excluded Area served as a buffer zone that was not associated with aerospace testing or other industrial activities.

At the request of DTSC, Aerojet completed an extensive study of the Excluded Area in search of evidence that historical activities (such as gold dredging) may have resulted in release of chemical contaminants to soil within the area. Findings from Aerojet's study concluded that the Excluded Area did not contain sources of chemical contamination as a result of mining activities, and did not contain areas where any historical aerospace contractor activities were conducted. However, evidence of trash from illegal dumping activities, sealed drums, and stained soils were encountered. The stained soils were determined to contain trace amounts of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Following cleanup activities that included removal of the contaminated soil, trash, and sealed drums, DTSC issued a determination in 1997 to redefine the IRCTS to remove the 1,100 acres identified as the Excluded Area from provisions of the Enforceable Order issued for the IRCTS.

As discussed later in this analysis, the groundwater beneath the Excluded Area, which is between 100 and 230 feet below the ground surface, is contaminated with volatile organic compounds (primarily trichloroethene) and perchlorate. DTSC has issued a deed restriction for the property in the Excluded Area (development Phase 1) that prohibits beneficial uses of this groundwater. Beneficial uses would include drilling for a potable or irrigation water supply well. The lack of contaminants in soil and soil vapor in the Phase 1 development area along with the prohibition against groundwater contact would prevent exposure to contaminated groundwater. The sources of potable water for the project site are discussed in detail in Section 3.5, "Utilities and Service Systems." The proposed school would not use groundwater to serve its students, but instead would use the same surface water supplies provided to the overall Rio del Oro project. Thus, groundwater contamination would not represent a problem for siting the school.

Hazardous Pipelines

There are no buried high-pressure natural gas pipelines, liquid petroleum pipelines, or hazardous materials/hazardous waste pipelines beneath, adjacent to, or within 1,500 feet of the project site. The Phase 1 development area would connect to extensions of the existing service lines, with the ultimate configuration to be approved by Pacific Gas and Electric Company. All natural gas lines

would be routed within the rights-of-way of project site streets. Therefore, the proposed school site would not be in proximity to hazardous pipelines.

Hazardous Air Emissions and Facilities within One-Quarter Mile

ENSR International (ENSR) presented findings and conclusions from a Baseline Risk Assessment of the IRCTS in a report dated December 2004. That report, *Baseline Risk Assessment for the Northern and Southern Groundwater Study Areas* (ENSR International 2004), addressed risks arising from chemicals found in groundwater, soil, and soil vapor. ENSR also evaluated the residential exposure pathway to vapors volatilized from groundwater, migrating through soil vapor, and introduced to indoor air. The ENSR evaluation focused on areas where groundwater was less than 90 feet below ground surface. The cancer tolerance interval was selected based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) maximum residential exposure thresholds of 10^{-4} to 10^{-6}.

The calculations in the risk assessment showed the carcinogenic risk associated with inhalation of volatiles in indoor air to be 1.25×10^{-5}, primarily due to the presence of perchloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE). ENSR concluded this value to be within the EPA target risk range of 1×10^{-6} to 1×10^{-4}. ENSR calculated the noncarcinogenic hazard quotient to be 0.08, which is less than the EPA threshold of 1.

Therefore, the results of ENSR's study indicate that there would be no substantial impacts on human health arising from indoor air quality.

The air quality impacts of the Grantline West mining operations, which would occur at the same time as project development but under a separate Conditional Use Permit issued by the City, were presented in the *Grantline West Mitigated Negative Declaration* (City of Rancho Cordova 2005b). Results of that analysis indicated that both short-term construction-related and long-term operations-related NO_X emissions would be below the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District's (SMAQMD's) thresholds. However, it was determined that PM_{10} emissions could exceed SMAQMD thresholds, and therefore mitigation measures were recommended in the *Grantline West Mitigated Negative Declaration* and the *Aerojet Mining Amendment Mitigated Negative Declaration* (City of Rancho Cordova 2004) to reduce PM_{10} emissions to a less-than-significant level. As mitigated, indirect impacts from mining activities would not exceed SMAQMD standards for other criteria pollutants. Neither of the two environmental documents indicated that CO emissions would exceed ambient air quality standards.

Other Health Hazards

The proposed school site is located above the Northern Groundwater Study Area (NGSA) (Exhibit 3.13-2) within the Excluded Area and west of the IRCTS. The NGSA includes a portion of the Phase 1 development area and the entire development area of Phases 2 and 4 of the project. This area was designated to address chemicals in the groundwater originating from the Propellant Burn Area, Sigma Complex, DM-14 Assembly Area, and the Aerojet National Priority List site located north of White Rock Road. Approximately 50 groundwater monitoring wells have been installed in the NGSA. Sampling data indicate that volatile organic compounds (primarily TCE) and perchlorate are the primary chemicals of concern in the groundwater, and that the direction of groundwater flow is primarily toward the west-southwest. A draft Groundwater Feasibility Study and a Baseline Risk Assessment were submitted to DTSC and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) in 2004.

Aerojet, the Boeing Corporation, and the McDonnell Douglas Corporation are continuing to characterize and remediate contaminants that are present in soil, soil vapor, and groundwater within the IRCTS because of historical uses at the project site. The IRCTS encompasses those lands within development Phases 2–5 adjacent to the proposed school site. Remediation of the IRCTS includes ongoing activities that are being carried out under the oversight of DTSC and the Central Valley RWQCB. (See Section 3.13, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials.")

Proximity to Railroad Tracks

The Rio del Oro project site is not located within 1,500 feet of a railroad track easement.

Flooding

According to FEMA, the area along Morrison Creek as it flows through the project site has not received detailed study for inclusion in Flood Insurance Rate Maps. However, this portion of Morrison Creek has been designated by the County Department of Water Resources as lying within a 100-year floodplain. Therefore, a conceptual storm drain trunk system has been designed for the specific plan area, which would satisfy 10- and 100-year design requirements as prescribed in the County Standards. See Section 3.4, "Drainage, Hydrology, and Water Quality," for additional information on the proposed storm drain systems.

Air Quality Adjacent to Busy Traffic Corridors

Primary access to the elementary school campus would be by means of residential roadways. These roadways would not constitute a freeway or busy traffic corridor.

Access/Streets

The proposed school site would be safely and easily accessible to residential neighborhoods by pedestrian, bus, and private-automobile traffic on publicly maintained roadways or walkways. Safety of the streets and travel routes surrounding the project site, and safety of the proposed roadway network, is described in Section 3.14, "Traffic and Transportation."

Wetlands

A wetland delineation conducted by ECORP in 2005 and verified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in September 2005 identified a total of approximately 56.6 acres of jurisdictional wetlands on the project site. The vast majority of the vernal pools and seasonal wetland swales and all of the seasonal drainages are concentrated within the annual grassland habitat in the southern portion of the project site, where approximately 507 acres of habitat would be designated as Wetland Preserve under the Proposed Project Alternative. Section 3.10, "Biological Resources," provides additional information on the location of existing wetlands and the Wetland Preserve areas that would be designated under each alternative. See also Chapter 2, "Alternatives," for the Wetland Preserve areas designated under each land use alternative.

Land Use Plans

The land use plan for the specific plan area identifies the elementary school site as adjacent to medium-density residential (north), single-family residential (east and west), and a park (south). The area east of the school site could be used for aggregate mining operations (not part of the Rio del Oro project) before development of other phases of the specific plan. Mining would be incompatible with school uses. Mitigation Measure 3.13-5 would reduce the possible public-safety hazards related to construction activities and mining operations by providing a clear

demarcation of construction areas, including fencing, temporary walls, signage, protective barriers, and other necessary security provisions for public safety (see Section 3.13, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials"). After mining is complete, the area would be graded for subsequent phases of project development, and medium-density residential units would be constructed.

Conclusion

CDE minimum site criteria identify various factors that must be considered in selecting a school site to protect the health and safety of students and staff. As described in more detail elsewhere in this DEIR/DEIS, the designated elementary school site would likely meet most of the minimum site criteria (e.g., proximity to high-voltage power lines, proximity to railroad tracks). However, factors such as the presence of aggregate mining operations east of the project site may require additional assessment based on CDE's evaluation of the minimum site criteria. Because it is unclear whether further environmental review by CDE would identify potentially significant land use conflicts and mitigation measures, the level of significance of this impact cannot be adequately determined; therefore, until FCUSD conducts a separate, site-specific environmental review, the **direct** impacts must be assumed to be **potentially significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. ***[Similar]***

NP

Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. Mining activities, however, would not generate students or require new schools because no development would occur.

Because no development would occur under the No Project Alternative, the proposed school site would not be constructed; thus, **no direct** or **indirect** impacts would occur. ***[Lesser]***

Mitigation Measure: No feasible mitigation measures are available.

PP, HD, IM, NF

No feasible mitigation measures can be identified at this time for the reasons described below.

Because a conceptual site plan was developed and provided by FCUSD, details of this school were available to conduct a project-specific analysis. However, no other conceptual site plans for the remaining designated school sites are available. Despite the absence of a school district as lead agency, the DEIR/DEIS discusses the elementary school site (for which a conceptual site plan was provided) because the project applicant(s) and the City, in identifying school sites within the Rio del Oro Specific Plan area, have tried to be cognizant of school siting requirements and criteria. The intent of analyzing the proposed elementary school was not for FCUSD to rely solely on the Rio del Oro Specific Plan EIR/EIS for project-level review of Phase 1 schools. Rather, the analysis was intended to identify potential issues with CDE criteria early in the planning process and expedite FCUSD's preparation of its site-specific environmental review document. The same would be true for the proposed elementary schools, although without conceptual site plans it is difficult to conduct a project-level analysis.

The process for school site approval in California would also require DTSC and CDE to review the appropriate environmental documentation (for DTSC, the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment; for CDE, the DEIR/DEIS and applicable forms) to determine whether the proposed school site meets CDE siting criteria after their review. Often, CDE will require additional risk assessments as part of the site approval process; these risk assessments may identify portions of a site for which some types of use may be restricted to ensure student safety.

In addition, DTSC could require FCUSD to conduct a PEA to identify specific risks and appropriate mitigation, based on the results of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. These additional levels of agency review and approval are outside the CEQA/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process; although some of these determinations may take place before the EIR/EIS is certified, the process is separate and distinct from environmental review. CDE will not grant final site approval until site-level environmental review is completed.

The risk assessments required under certain conditions may identify constraints within which the school district must work to obtain CDE approval of a site. If CDE requires additional assessments, the district would obtain and implement any identified mitigation to reduce risks or constraints at the site to an acceptable level as determined by CDE.

NP No mitigation measures are required.

For the reasons described above under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, no feasible mitigation can be identified at this time for this direct, potentially significant impact, and **an ultimate level of significance of this impact cannot be determined**. Therefore, for purposes of this analysis, it must be assumed that this impact would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

IMPACT 3.1-8

Potential Land Use Conflict with California Department of Education Minimum Site Criteria for Siting the Proposed High School/Middle School. *A combined middle school/high school is proposed as part of development Phase 1. CDE minimum site criteria identify various factors that must be considered in selecting a school site to protect the health and safety of students and staff. Aggregate mining operations adjacent to the site and other factors may require additional assessment based on CDE's evaluation of the minimum site criteria.*

PP, HD, IM, NF

FCUSD would construct and operate a combined high school/middle school facility (Mather High School and Morrison Creek Middle School) on property to be purchased from the Phase 1 project applicant (Elliott Homes). The following impact analysis broadly applies the CDE minimum siting criteria described above in the "Regulatory Framework" section to the designated school site and identifies the location of additional information in this DEIR/DEIS.

Airports

Mather Airport is approximately 3.7 miles from the proposed school site. According to the Mather Airport CLUP, the proposed school site is outside of the 60-db CNEL or above noise contours and outside of the 2-mile radius from the end of the runway. Therefore, the site would not be located within any aircraft accident exposure or airport safety area.

Proximity to High-Voltage Power Transmission Lines

A 12-kV SMUD substation is approximately 2.8 miles northeast of the proposed school site. The new on-site electrical service lines that would be less than 69 kV would be routed underground within the rights-of-way of project site streets. Existing aboveground electrical lines would be placed underground during construction of new facilities. Therefore, the proposed school site would not be in proximity to high-voltage power transmission lines.

Proximity to Toxic and Hazardous Substances

The proposed school site would potentially be in proximity to toxic and hazardous substances. The site is in an area referred to as the Excluded Area, which encompasses approximately

1,100 acres immediately west of the IRCTS. The Excluded Area served as a buffer zone that was not associated with aerospace testing or other industrial activities.

At the request of DTSC, Aerojet completed an extensive study of the Excluded Area in search of evidence that historical activities (such as gold dredging) may have resulted in release of chemical contaminants to soil within the area. Findings from Aerojet's study concluded that the Excluded Area did not contain sources of chemical contamination as a result of mining activities, and did not contain areas where any historical aerospace contractor activities were conducted. However, evidence of trash from illegal dumping activities, sealed drums, and stained soils were encountered. The stained soils were determined to contain trace amounts of PCBs. Following cleanup activities that included removal of the contaminated soil, trash, and sealed drums, DTSC issued a determination in 1997 to redefine the IRCTS to remove the 1,100 acres identified as the Excluded Area from provisions of the Enforceable Order issued for the IRCTS. Thus, the proposed school site would not be located on a hazardous materials site.

The closest remediation site to the high school/middle school is the Beta Complex, which is approximately 150 feet south and surrounded by a security fence. The Beta Complex includes approximately 120 acres that contained two rocket test stands and support facilities that were used for static firing of the Saturn S-IVB liquid rocket motor. However, DTSC approved a No Further Action designation for the Beta Complex in 2002, and this site is fully remediated. Additional sites within the IRCTS are still undergoing remediation activities. Section 3.13, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials," provides further information on hazardous materials.

As discussed later in this discussion, the groundwater beneath the Excluded Area, which is between 100 and 230 feet below the ground surface, is contaminated with volatile organic compounds (primarily TCE) and perchlorate. DTSC has issued a Deed Restriction for the property in the Excluded Area (development Phase 1) that prohibits beneficial uses of this groundwater. Beneficial uses would include drilling for a potable or irrigation water supply well. The lack of contaminants in soil and soil vapor in the Phase 1 development area along with the prohibition against groundwater contact would prevent exposure to contaminated groundwater. The sources of potable water for the project site are discussed in detail in Section 3.5, "Utilities and Service Systems." The proposed school would not use groundwater to serve its students, but instead would use the same surface water supplies provided to the overall Rio del Oro project. Thus, groundwater contamination would not represent a problem for siting the school.

Hazardous Pipelines

There are no buried high-pressure natural gas pipelines, liquid petroleum pipelines, or hazardous materials/hazardous waste pipelines beneath, adjacent to, or within 1,500 feet of the project site. The Phase 1 development area would connect to extensions of the existing service lines, with the ultimate configuration to be approved by PG&E. All natural gas lines would be routed within the rights-of-way of project site streets. Therefore, the proposed school site would not be in proximity to hazardous pipelines.

Hazardous Air Emissions and Facilities within One-Quarter Mile

ENSR presented findings and conclusions from a Baseline Risk Assessment of the IRCTS in a report dated December 2004. That report, *Baseline Risk Assessment for the Northern and Southern Groundwater Study Areas* (ENSR International 2004), addressed risks arising from chemicals found in groundwater, soil, and soil vapor. ENSR also evaluated the residential exposure pathway to vapors volatilized from groundwater, migrating through soil vapor, and

introduced to indoor air. The ENSR evaluation focused on areas where groundwater was less than 90 feet below ground surface. The cancer tolerance interval was selected based on EPA's maximum residential exposure thresholds of 10^{-4} to 10^{6}.

The calculations in the risk assessment showed the carcinogenic risk associated with inhalation of volatiles in indoor air to be 1.25×10^{-5}, primarily because of the presence of PCE and TCE. ENSR concluded this value to be within the EPA target risk range of 1×10^{-6} to 1×10^{-4}. ENSR calculated the noncarcinogenic hazard quotient to be 0.08, which is less than the EPA threshold of 1.

Therefore, the results of ENSR's study indicate that there would be no substantial impacts on human health arising from indoor air quality.

The air quality impacts of the Grantline West mining operations, which would occur at the same time as project development but under a separate conditional use permit issued by the City, were presented in the *Grantline West Mitigated Negative Declaration* (City of Rancho Cordova 2005b). Results of that analysis indicated that both short-term construction-related and long-term operations-related NO_X emissions would be below SMAQMD's thresholds. However, it was determined that PM_{10} emissions could exceed SMAQMD thresholds, and therefore mitigation measures were recommended in the *Grantline West Mitigated Negative Declaration* and the *Aerojet Mining Amendment Mitigated Negative Declaration* (City of Rancho Cordova 2004) to reduce PM_{10} emissions to a less-than-significant level. As mitigated, indirect impacts from mining activities would not exceed SMAQMD standards for other criteria pollutants. Neither of the two environmental documents indicated that CO emissions would exceed ambient air quality standards.

Other Health Hazards

The proposed school site is located above the NGSA (Exhibit 3.13-2) within the Excluded Area and west of the IRCTS. The NGSA includes a portion of the Phase 1 development area and the entire development area of Phases 2 and 4 of the project. This area was designated to address chemicals in the groundwater originating from the Propellant Burn Area, Sigma Complex, DM-14 Assembly Area, and the Aerojet NPL site located north of White Rock Road. Approximately 50 groundwater monitoring wells have been installed in the NGSA. Sampling data indicate that volatile organic compounds (primarily TCE) and perchlorate are the primary chemicals of concern in the groundwater, and that the direction of groundwater flow is primarily toward the west-southwest. A draft Groundwater Feasibility Study and a Baseline Risk Assessment were submitted to DTSC and the Central Valley RWQCB in 2004.

Aerojet, the Boeing Corporation, and the McDonnell Douglas Corporation are continuing to characterize and remediate contaminants that are present in soil, soil vapor, and groundwater within the IRCTS because of historical uses at the project site. The IRCTS encompasses those lands within the development area of Phases 2–5 that are adjacent to the proposed school site. Remediation of the IRCTS includes ongoing activities that are being carried out under the oversight of DTSC and the Central Valley RWQCB. (See Section 3.13, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials.")

Proximity to Railroad Tracks

The Rio del Oro project site is not located within 1,500 feet of a railroad track easement.

Flooding

According to FEMA, the area along Morrison Creek as it flows through the project site has not received detailed study for inclusion in Flood Insurance Rate Maps. However, this portion of Morrison Creek has been designated by the County Department of Water Resources as lying within a 100-year floodplain. Therefore, a conceptual storm drain trunk system has been designed for the specific plan area, which would satisfy 10- and 100-year design requirements as prescribed in the County Standards. See Section 3.4, "Drainage, Hydrology, and Water Quality," for additional information on the proposed storm drain systems.

Air Quality Adjacent to Busy Traffic Corridors

Primary access to the campuses would be by means of two signalized intersections located on Jaeger Road (aka Rancho Cordova Parkway) and Rio del Oro Parkway. These roadways would not constitute a freeway or busy traffic corridor. (See Section 3.14, "Traffic and Transportation," for additional information on the proposed roadway network.)

Access/Streets

The proposed school site would be safely and easily accessible to residential neighborhoods by pedestrian, bus, and private-automobile traffic on publicly maintained roadways or walkways. Safety of the streets and travel routes surrounding the project site, and safety of the proposed roadway network, is described in Section 3.14, "Traffic and Transportation."

Wetlands

A wetland delineation conducted by ECORP in 2005 and verified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in September 2005 identified a total of approximately 56.6 acres of jurisdictional wetlands on the project site. The vast majority of the vernal pools and seasonal wetland swales and all of the seasonal drainages are concentrated within the annual grassland habitat in the southern portion of the project site, where approximately 507 acres of habitat would be designated as Wetland Preserve under the Proposed Project. Section 3.10, "Biological Resources," provides additional information on the location of existing wetlands and the areas that would be designated as Wetland Preserve under each alternative. See also Chapter 2, "Alternatives," for the Wetland Preserve areas designated under each land use alternative.

Land Use Plans

The land use plan for the specific plan area identifies the high school/middle school site as adjacent to a community park (north) and single-family (west) and medium-density residential (south) developments. The area east of the school site could be used for aggregate mining operations before development of other phases of the specific plan. This land use would be incompatible with school uses. Mitigation Measure 3.13-5 would reduce the possible public-safety hazards related to construction activities and mining operations by providing a clear demarcation of construction areas, including fencing, temporary walls, signage, protective barriers, and other necessary security provisions for public safety. (See Section 3.13, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials.") After mining is complete, the area would be graded for subsequent phases of project development, and medium-density residential units would be constructed.

Conclusion

CDE minimum site criteria identify various factors that must be considered in selecting a school site to protect the health and safety of students and staff. As described in above and in more detail

elsewhere in this DEIR/DEIS, the designated middle school/high school site would meet most of the minimum site criteria (e.g., proximity to airports, proximity to high-voltage power lines, proximity to railroad tracks). Ongoing aggregate mining operations could occur east of the proposed school site, producing hazardous air emissions and noise. These and other factors may require additional assessment based on CDE's evaluation of the minimum site criteria. Because it is unclear whether further environmental review by CDE would identify potentially significant land use conflicts and mitigation measures, the level of significance of this impact cannot be adequately determined; therefore, until FCUSD conducts a separate, site-specific environmental review, the **direct** impacts must be assumed to be **potentially significant**. **No indirect** impacts would occur. ***[Similar]***

NP

Under the No Project Alternative, mining activities at the project site, which are not part of the Rio del Oro project, would continue under existing Conditional Use Permits—one originally issued by the County, and the other issued by the City—and possibly under one or more future individual Implementation Permits expected to be issued by the City. Mining activities, however, would not generate students or require new schools because no development would occur.

Because no development would occur under the No Project Alternative, the proposed school site would not be constructed; thus, **no direct** or **indirect** impacts would occur. ***[Lesser]***

Mitigation Measure: No feasible mitigation measures are available.

PP, HD, IM, NF

No feasible mitigation measures can be identified at this time for the reasons described below. Because a conceptual site plan was developed and provided by FCUSD, details of this school were available to conduct a project-specific analysis. Despite the absence of a school district as lead agency, the DEIR/DEIS discusses the high school/middle school site because the project applicant(s) and the City, in identifying school sites within the Rio del Oro Specific Plan area, have tried to be cognizant of school siting requirements and criteria. The intent of analyzing the proposed high school/middle school was not for FCUSD to rely solely on the Rio del Oro Specific Plan EIR/EIS for project-level review of Phase 1 schools. Rather, the analysis was intended to identify potential issues with CDE criteria early in the planning process and expedite FCUSD's preparation of its site-specific environmental review document. The same would be true for the proposed elementary schools, although without conceptual site plans it is difficult to conduct a project-level analysis.

The process for school site approval in California would also require DTSC and CDE to review the appropriate environmental documentation (for DTSC, the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment; for CDE, the DEIR/DEIS and applicable forms) to determine whether the proposed school site meets CDE siting criteria after their review. Often, CDE will require additional risk assessments as part of the site approval process; these risk assessments may identify portions of a site for which some types of use may be restricted to ensure student safety.

In addition, DTSC could require FCUSD to conduct a PEA to identify specific risks and appropriate mitigation, based on the results of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. These additional levels of agency review and approval are outside the CEQA/NEPA process; although some of these determinations may take place before the EIR/EIS is certified, the process is separate and distinct from environmental review. CDE will not grant final site approval until site-level environmental review is completed.

The risk assessments required under certain conditions may identify constraints within which the school district must work to obtain CDE approval of a site. If CDE requires additional assessments, the district would obtain and implement any identified mitigation to reduce risks or constraints at the site to an acceptable level as determined by CDE.

NP No mitigation measures are required.

For the reasons described above under the Proposed Project, High Density, Impact Minimization, and No Federal Action Alternatives, no feasible mitigation can be identified at this time for this direct potentially significant impact, and **an ultimate level of significance of this impact cannot be determined**. Therefore, for purposes of this analysis, it must be assumed that this impact would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Implementing the project would not physically divide a community. It therefore also would not contribute to a cumulative impact on this basis.

The Rio del Oro Specific Plan project is located in the City of Rancho Cordova in the eastern portion of Sacramento County. The county as a whole must be considered for the purpose of evaluating land use impacts on a cumulative level. Development anticipated by the SACOG Sacramento Region Blueprint and the City General Plan Land Use Element and Land Use Map will change the intensity of land uses in the region. Future projects will increase development and provide additional housing, employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities.

Future growth under cumulative conditions may result in a variety of land use impacts such as consistency with land use plans and land use incompatibility. Impacts involving adopted land use plans or policies and zoning generally would not combine to result in cumulative impacts. The determination of significance for impacts related to these issues, as described by Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, and referenced earlier in this section, is whether a project would conflict with any applicable land use plan or policy adopted for the purpose of reducing or avoiding environmental impacts. Such a conflict is site-specific; it is addressed on a project-by-project basis. Implementing the project would not result in significant land use planning impacts, and the project's ultimate consistency with local land use plans, policies, and zoning is ensured through entitlements to revise the City General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Further, planned projects in Rancho Cordova are apparently consistent with environmental plans and policies, to the extent that proposed land uses have been identified. Because no land use impacts would occur on a project-specific basis, the project would not contribute to any potential cumulative land use impacts.

Development of the project would change the site from rural, undeveloped land to urban land uses. With the development of large planned projects (e.g., Sunrise Douglas Community Plan/SunRidge Specific Plan, Grantline West, Easton Master Planned Community), much of the remaining open space within Rancho Cordova is expected to be converted to other land uses. The project would contribute cumulatively to this impact by changing the project site from rural, undeveloped land to urban land uses; therefore, the impact is considered cumulatively considerable (i.e., significant) when considered along with past urban development and planned future development proposed in Rancho Cordova, the surrounding communities, and the county as a whole.

3.1.4 RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The project would not convert land identified as Important Farmland or cancel Williamson Act contracts. With implementation of the mitigation measures described above, project implementation would not result in any residual significant impacts directly related to land use. However, residually significant impacts would remain from the development of schools; because detailed site plans are not available, no feasible mitigation can be identified at this time to ensure that the CDE minimum criteria are met. Additionally, an ultimate level of significance of this impact cannot be determined at this time. However, until a detailed site plan is available and

FCUSD conducts a separate, site-specific environmental review, the impacts must be assumed to remain significant and unavoidable.

Additionally, the City would determine whether conflicts between the project and the SACOG Preferred Blueprint Scenario would translate into potentially significant impacts. The City would carefully consider whether implementation of the project or alternatives under consideration would result in the loss of an opportunity to accomplish a long-term environmental benefit or to minimize a long-term environmental impact. For these reasons, this impact must be assumed to remain significant and unavoidable.