

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Project Description is to describe the project in a manner that would be meaningful to the public, reviewing agencies, and decision makers. As described in Section 15124 of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines*, a complete Project Description must contain the following information: (1) a precise location and boundaries of the project, shown on a detailed map, along with a regional map of the project's location; (2) a statement of the objectives sought by the project, which should include the underlying purpose of the project; (3) a general description of the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; and (4) a statement briefly describing the intended uses of the EIR, including a list of the agencies that are expected to use the EIR in their decision making, a list of permits and other approvals required to implement the project, and a list of related environmental review and consultation requirements imposed by federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or policies (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15124). The *State CEQA Guidelines* state that an adequate Project Description need not be exhaustive, but should provide the level of detail necessary for the evaluation and review of the project's potential significant environmental impacts.

The Project Description is the starting point for all environmental analysis required by CEQA. Section 15146 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* states that the level of detail in an EIR should correspond to the level of specificity defined in the Project Description. This Project Description chapter serves as the basis for the environmental analysis contained in this EIR. This chapter describes the project, as well as its location and characteristics, and it includes statements describing the project's objectives and the intended uses of this EIR.

The project proposes a residential subdivision consisting of 356 lots in the southern hills of the City of Pittsburg. This EIR refers to this proposed development as the proposed project.

PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

Location

As illustrated in **Figure 3.0-1, Regional Vicinity Map**, the majority of the project site is located in Contra Costa County adjacent to the southern city limit of the City of Pittsburg, within the City of Pittsburg Urban Limit Line and within the City's sphere of influence. The project site is approximately 3 miles from downtown Pittsburg. State Route 4 provides regional access to the project site. As shown in **Figure 3.0-2, Project Vicinity**, the approximately 165-acre project site (which includes a 148.3-acre main project site

and a 16.8-acre portion of an off-site parcel) lies on the west side of Kirker Pass Road approximately 1 mile south of Buchanan Road. The main project site is located outside the City limits and the off-site parcel is located within the City limits. The site is bordered by residential uses to the north and open space to the east, south, and west. The main project site includes Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 089-020-009, -011, -014, and -015. The project would also affect portions of an off-site parcel, APN 089-010-010.

Site Characteristics and Current Conditions

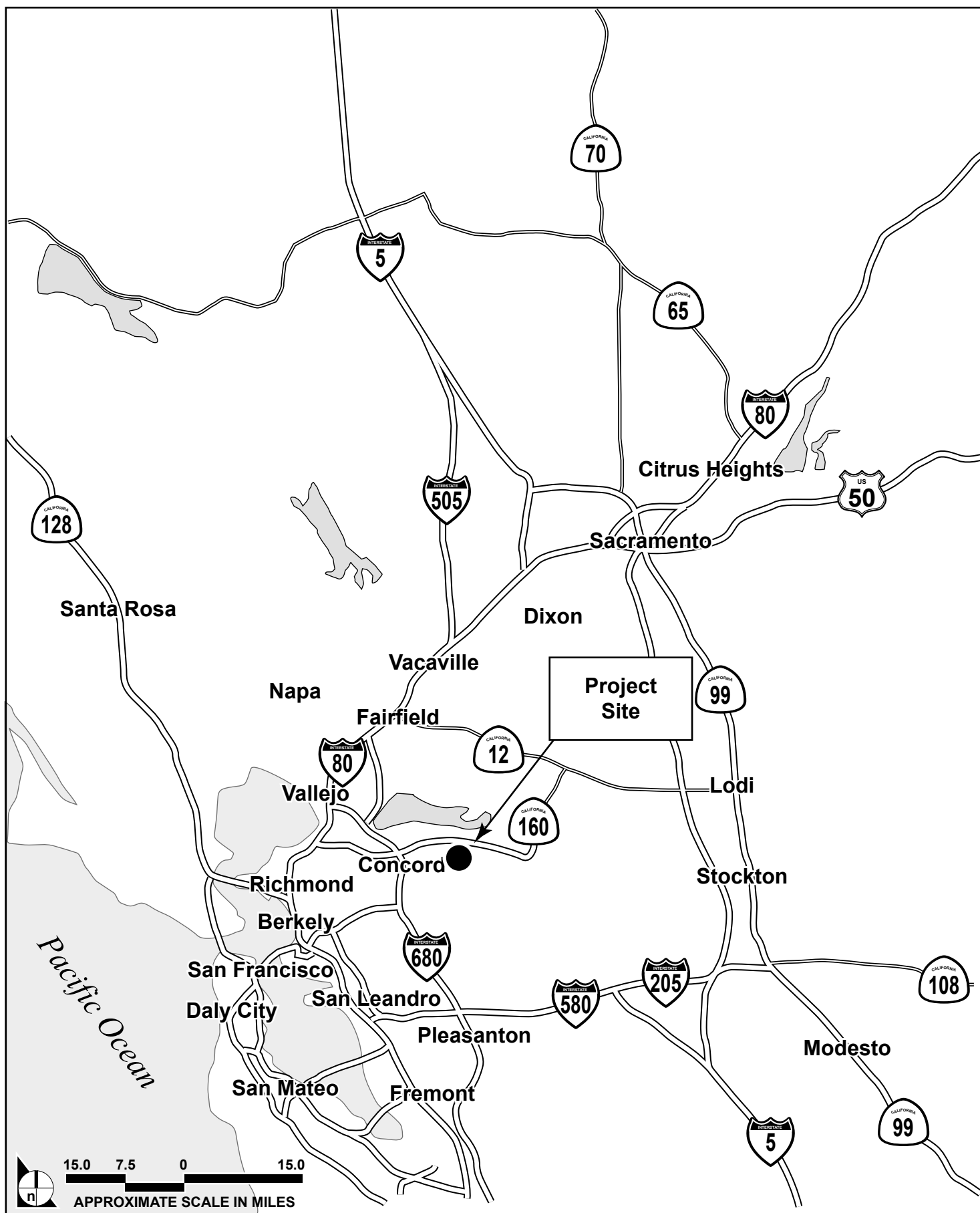
As illustrated in **Figure 3.0-3, Project Aerial Photograph**, the project site is presently undeveloped grazing land; the only structures on the site are high-tension lines and towers within several utility line easements. The hilly terrain forms a broad Y-shaped valley open to the eastern frontage along Kirker Pass Road where the valley floor is at least 1,000 feet wide. Several natural hills and ridges frame the valley, with two along the northern boundary, one along the southern boundary, and the others a short distance off-site to the west. The ridgeline on the southern portion of the site reaches an elevation of approximately 780 feet above mean sea level (MSL) and the ridgeline formed by the two hills on the northern boundary reaches an elevation of approximately 655 feet above MSL. There are currently no buildings on the site. A 10-inch high-pressure petroleum products pipeline traverses east/west through the southern portion of the main project site (within the proposed greenwall area).

Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is bounded on the west by undeveloped hillside grazing land that includes an existing PG&E transmission line and natural gas pipeline corridor, and is bounded on the east by Kirker Pass Road, with undeveloped hillside grazing land beyond. Hillside grazing land is also located to the south of the project, and to the north is a grassy ridgeline with older residential subdivisions beyond. The planned alignment of the James Donlon Expressway (formerly the Buchanan Road Bypass) would intersect with Kirker Pass Road at the main intersection accessing the project site, creating a four way signalized intersection.

General Plan and Zoning Designations

As indicated in **Figure 3.0-4, General Plan Designations**, the current City of Pittsburg General Plan designations for the main project site are Low Density Residential and Open Space while the current City of Pittsburg General Plan designations for the off-site parcel are Hillside Low Density Residential and Open Space. As shown in **Figure 3.0-5, Zoning Designations**, the current Pittsburg pre-zoning designations for the main project site are HPD (Hillside Planned Development) District and OS (Open Space). The off-site parcel has an existing City zoning designations of HPD and OS; however, the actual location of the proposed off-site basin would be entirely within the OS district.



SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. – October 2011

FIGURE 3.0-1

Regional Vicinity Map

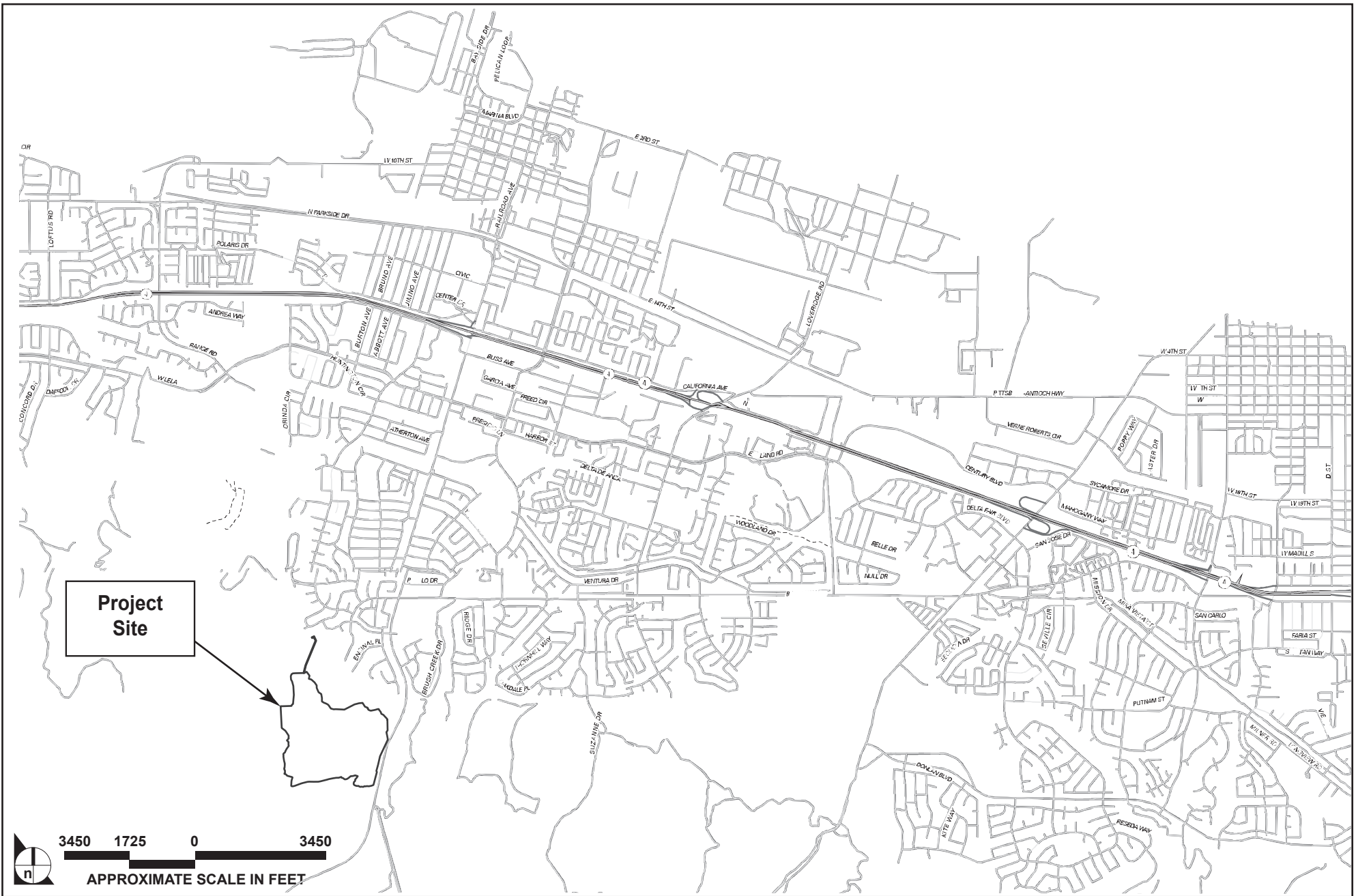


FIGURE **3.0-2**

Project Vicinity

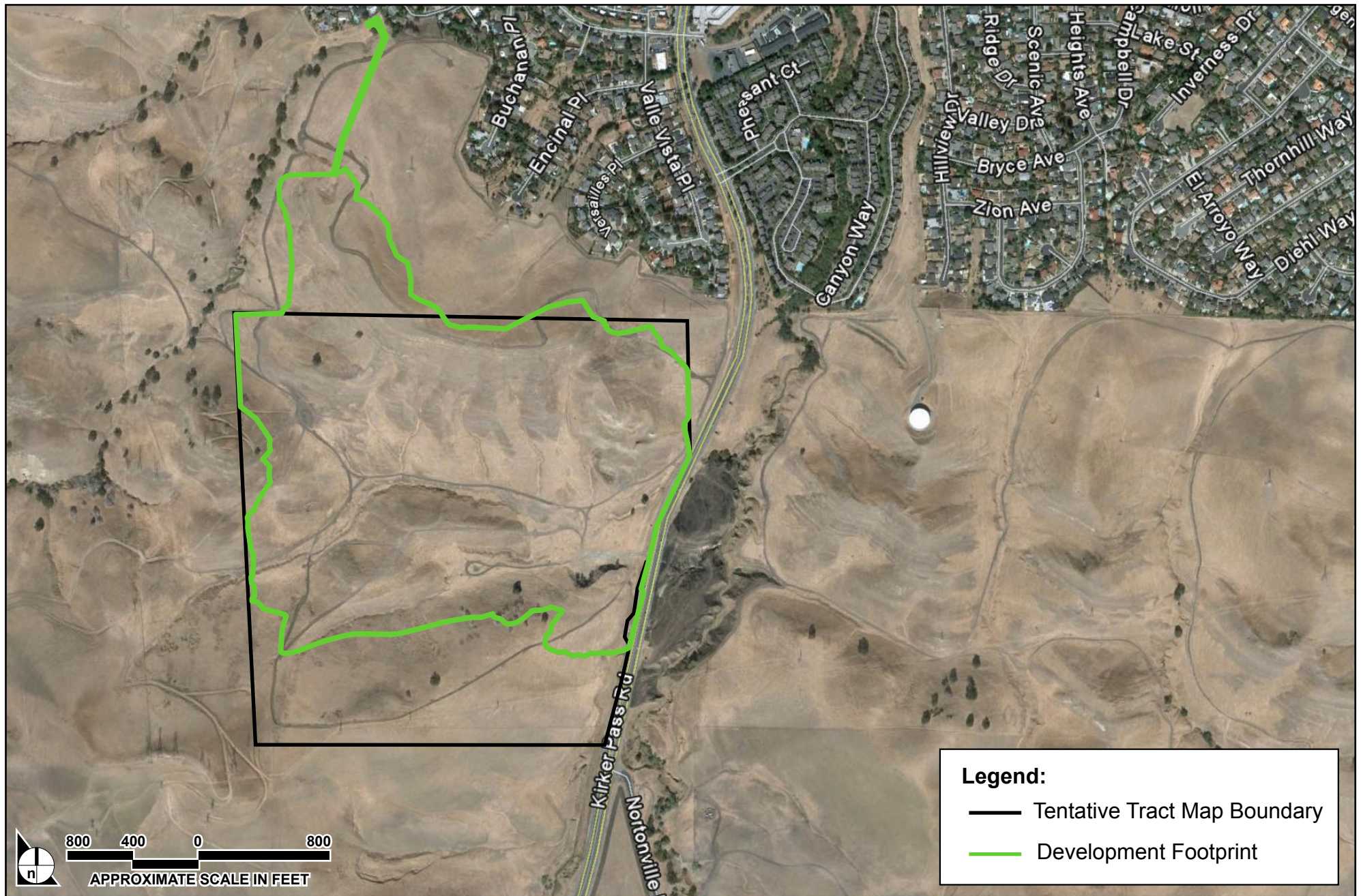
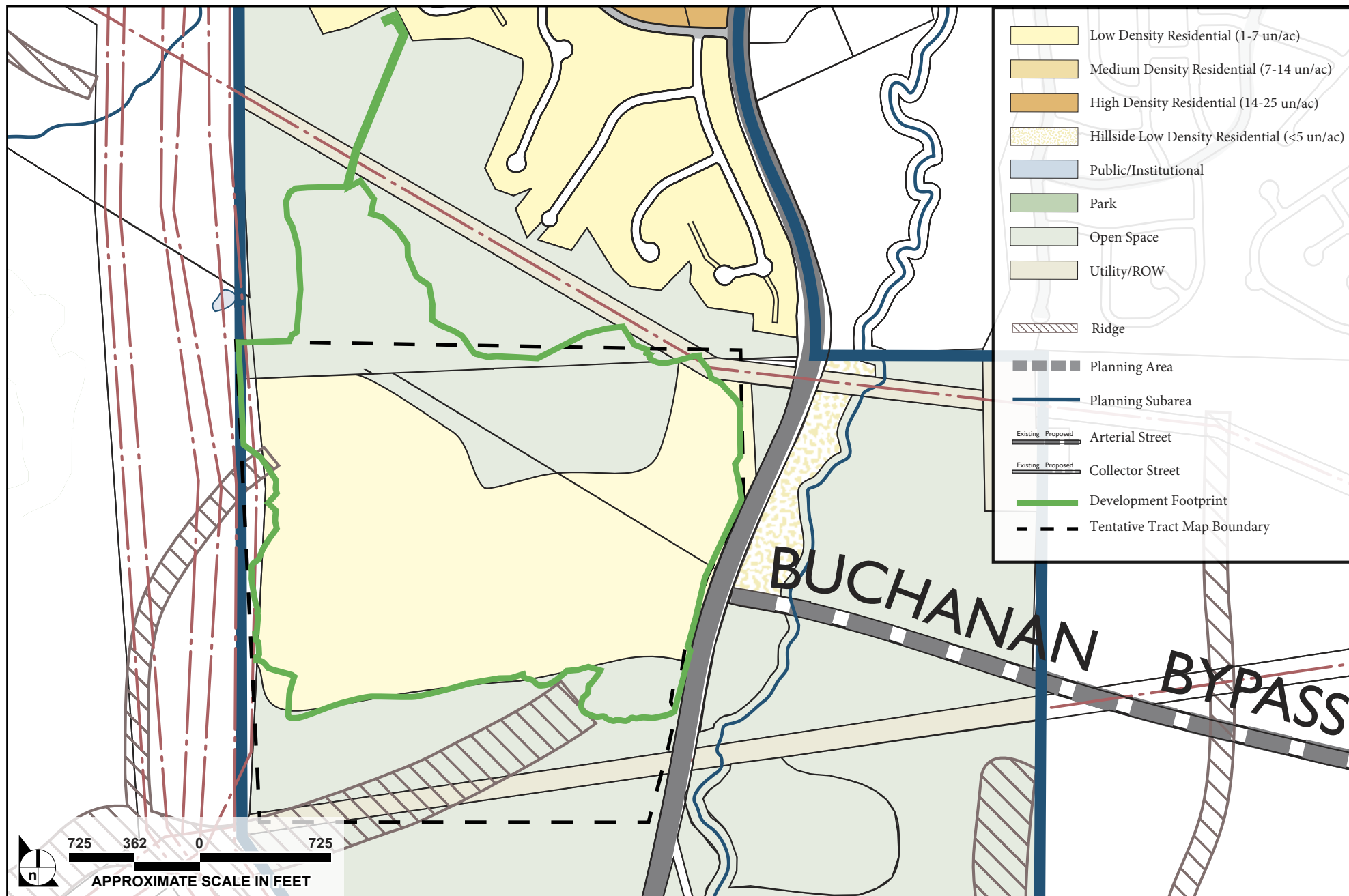


FIGURE 3.0-3

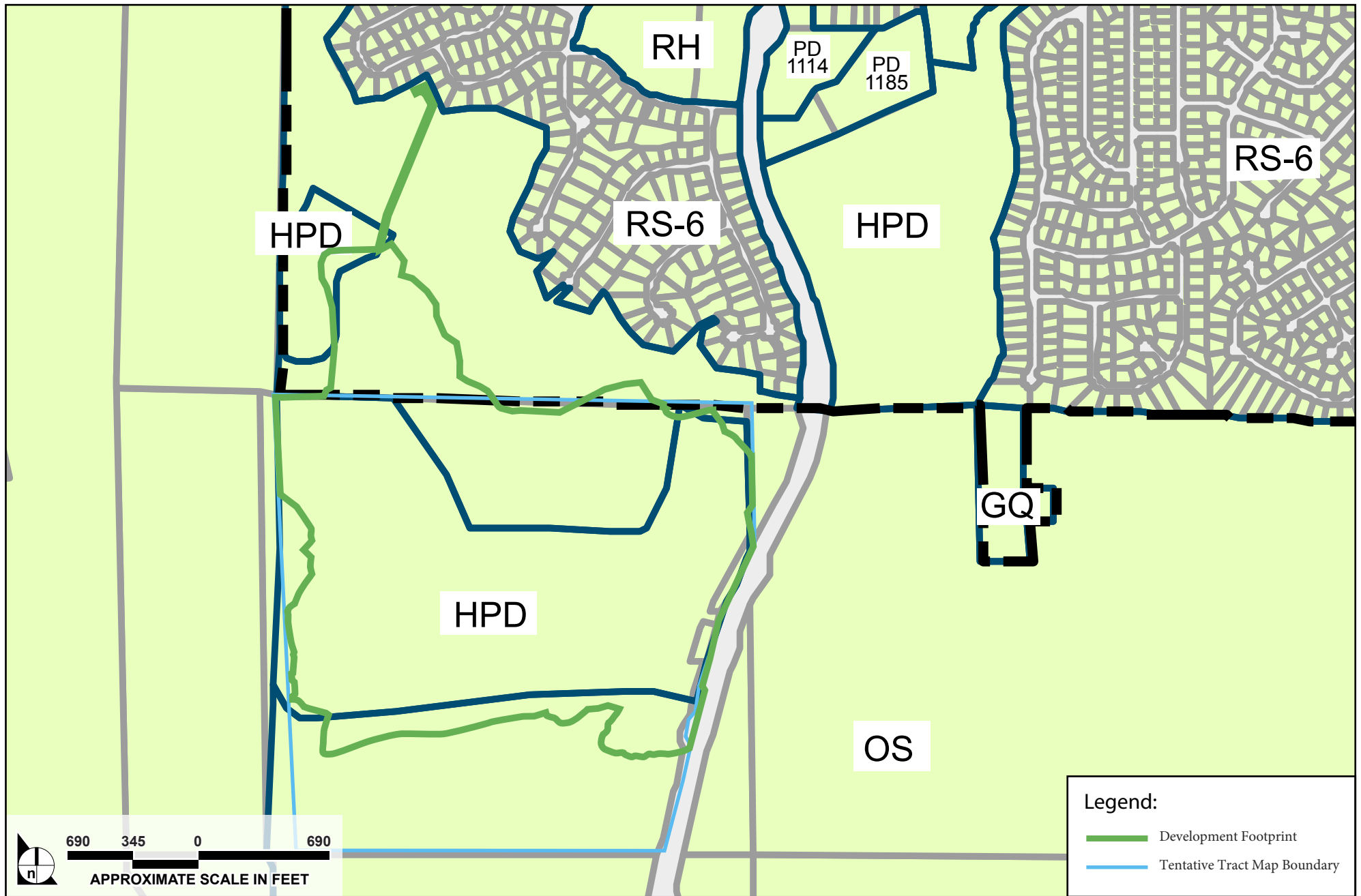
Project Aerial Photograph



SOURCE: Dyett & Bhatia

FIGURE 3.0-4

General Plan Designations



SOURCE: Dyett & Bhatia

FIGURE 3.0-5

Zoning Designations

The current Contra Costa County General Plan designation for the main project site is AL (Agricultural Lands) while the current Contra Costa County-zoning designation for the main project site is A-4 (Agricultural Preserve).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Montreux Residential Subdivision project consists of: (1) a request for rezoning of the main project site from its current pre-zoning designation of HPD (Hillside Planned Development) to RS-6 (Single-Family Residential 6,000 square feet [sf] minimum lots sizes) pre-zoning, which would be consistent with the existing general plan designation of Low Density Residential; (2) a request for approval of a Vesting Tentative Map (Subdivision No. 8279) and preliminary grading plan for 356 single-family homes with lots averaging approximately 7,668 sf in size; (3) annexation of the main project site into the City of Pittsburg, Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) Service Area (including inclusion into the Central Valley Project), and the Delta Diablo Sanitation District (DDSD) Service Area; and (4) approval of a Development Agreement vesting the entitlements for an extended term of project approval. Overall, approximately 77 acres of the main project site would be devoted to residential uses and the remaining 71 acres would be set aside for open space. The average density on the main project site would be 2.4 units per acre.

Tentative Map and Grading Improvements

The proposed Vesting Tentative Map includes a preliminary grading plan for the site improvements and creation of 356 pads for future residential development, plus an off-site detention basin and an associated maintenance road. The preliminary grading plan and the location of the proposed residential pads on the main project site are illustrated in **Figure 3.0-6, Conceptual Site Plan**. The preliminary grading plan includes changes to the existing topography primarily through the grading of the interior/central portions of the main project site. Grading would include cuts to the hillslopes of approximately 75 vertical feet in some locations and fills of between 10 to 85 feet of graded soil in the low portions of the site. Most of the existing topography would be graded and re-contoured except for the southern portion of the main project site, which would largely be left in its natural state. The northern ridgeline (that has an elevation up to 655 feet at the present time) would be substantially reconfigured for placement of a water tank to serve the proposed project. No building pads would be located along the northern ridgeline separating the main project site from the existing City limits. The proposed water tank would be partially buried at the top of the hill on the northern boundary of the main project site (Parcel A), consistent with (in placement and design) the City's current Water Master Plan; the tank would be located partly on the adjacent off-site parcel.

Three stormwater detention basins are included in the preliminary grading plan, with two large basins located on the east side of the main project site (Parcels C and D) along Kirker Pass Road, and a third small basin with a 12 foot access road located on the off-site parcel to the northwest of the main project site. Construction of these basins would require grading to re-contour the eastern end of the southern ridgeline on the main project site, and the north-facing slope above the proposed off-site basin located on the off-site parcel. While the entire off-site parcel totals approximately 72 acres, only 16.8 acres would be graded in order to accommodate the new off-site basin (which has an actual footprint of 0.83 acre). The preliminary grading plan and the location of the off-site detention basin on the off-site parcel are provided in **Figure 3.0-7, Off-Site Detention Basin Site Plan**.

The proposed Vesting Tentative Map also includes approximately 42 acres of undeveloped land along the southern portion of the main project site (Parcel B) to provide a required greenwall (defined as open space with no water or sewer services passing through). The purpose of the greenwall is to limit growth to the south and separate the proposed residential uses from grazing and agricultural activities on properties within the County and south of the project site. There is a 10-inch high-pressure petroleum products pipeline which traverses the southern portion of the main project site (within the proposed greenwall area); however, it is important to note that this pipeline would be located more than 1,000 feet to the south of any proposed residential units.

Access to the main project site would be by way of two new roadways connecting to Kirker Pass Road. The main access would be located roughly at the center point of the project frontage, approximately 1,000 feet south of the present City limit, and would include a traffic signal. This intersection would eventually be a four-way intersection, directly aligned with the planned James Donlon expressway (formerly known as the Buchanan Road Bypass). The secondary access would be located approximately 400 feet further south along Kirker Pass Road. New storm drainage infrastructure, including drainage inlets and piping, would be installed in the proposed roadways on the main project site to connect developed areas to the stormwater detention basins.

Utility infrastructure required for the project would include new water, sanitary sewer, and electrical lines. These would be installed within the right of way along Kirker Pass Road and would connect to existing utilities within the Pittsburgh City limit.

SOURCE: Isakson & Associates, Inc. – September 2012

No architectural design review plans have been submitted at this time, and the future design of the units will be subject to design review approval by the Pittsburgh Planning Commission. A landscaping plan has been prepared for the proposed project and is illustrated in **Figure 3.0-8, Landscape Plan**.

Construction of the project is expected to occur in four overlapping phases. Each phase is expected to last approximately 18 months. For the purposes of this analysis, it was assumed that construction of the first phase would begin in spring 2015, with construction of the last phase starting in October 2016. This timeline presents an aggressive construction schedule, which provides the basis for a conservative impact analysis, especially for air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, as it represents the soonest that the proposed project can be constructed.

Approximately 106 acres¹ on the main project site would be graded while all 16.8 acres of the off-site parcel would be graded for a total of about 123 acres disturbed. While no soil would be imported or exported from the project site, approximately 1.4 million cubic yards of soil would be balanced throughout the site.

Development Agreement

Approval of a development agreement is being sought to accompany the proposed tentative map. The primary purpose of the development agreement is to vest the entitlements, providing for an extended term for the project approval; however, additional items would also be addressed such as (1) integration of the project entrance with the future James Donlon Boulevard Extension; (2) a \$2,000 per dwelling unit open space fee for the East Bay Regional Park District; and (3) provisions for compliance with the City's inclusionary housing ordinance.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Section 15124(b) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that the project description in an EIR include "a statement of the objectives sought by the project," which should include "the underlying purpose of the project." The objectives of the project are to:

- Provide additional moderate income housing opportunities within the community, consistent with General Plan goals, through development of a high end, high quality single-family detached subdivision with large lots; and
- Conserve open space by creating a "greenwall" (defined as open space with no water or sewer services passing through) on the southern 20 percent of the main project site.

¹ This figure includes Parcels A, C, D, and E which would be graded and then set aside as open space.

Intended Uses of the EIR

This EIR would serve as the environmental document for the actions associated with the development of the project. In accordance with CEQA, the purpose of this EIR is to inform the City, as lead agency, of the potentially significant environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the project, alternatives to the project, and any mitigation measures that may reduce or avoid any identified significant environmental effects. This EIR would also be used as an informational document by public agencies in connection with any approval or permits necessary for construction and operation of the project.

Approvals

A series of approvals from the City and other agencies would be necessary for implementation of the project. Discretionary approvals may include, but are not limited to, the actions/permits described below.

City of Pittsburg

- Certification of the Montreux Residential Subdivision EIR;
- Approval of a Vesting Tentative Map (Subdivision No. 8279);
- Annexation of the project area into the City limits, Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) Service Area (including inclusion into the Central Valley Project) and Delta Diablo Sanitation District (DDSD) Service Area;
- Rezoning of the site from its current pre-zoning designation of HPD to RS-6;
- Approval of a Development Agreement; and
- Design Review

Other Agencies

- Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) (annexation to the City of Pittsburg, annexation into the CCWD Service Area, and annexation into the DDSD Service Area);
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement – Fish and Game Code 1600 - for change in the state of stream, including land construction across natural streambed, which affects fish or wildlife resource);
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Section 401 Water Quality Certification if the project requires a US Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit);
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (Nationwide Section 404 Discharge Permit: discharge of fill material into “Waters of the United States” including wetlands); and
- United States Bureau of Reclamation (inclusion of the project site in Central Valley Project place of use to authorize CCWD to supply Central Valley Project water for the proposed residential subdivision)

