

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



# EXISTING CONDITIONS & PLANNING CONTEXT

February, 2008

JACKSON HIGHWAY VISIONING PROJECT



**ATTACHMENT A**

EXISTING CONDITIONS & PLANNING CONTEXT

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# PLANNING CONTEXT

## BACKGROUND

The Jackson Highway Visioning Project Area covers a contiguous land area of approximately 22,000 acres in the unincorporated central-east area of Sacramento County, California. The Project Area includes a broad grouping of properties centered along Jackson Road (SR 16, a.k.a. the “Jackson Highway”) and the regional-serving arterial roadways which bisect the highway including Grant Line Road, Sunrise Boulevard, Bradshaw Road, and Watt Avenue. The area extends from the confluence of Jackson Highway and Watt Avenue on its far western edge to the County’s Urban Services Boundary (USB, the ultimate extent of the urban edge in the unincorporated County) on the east. The Project Area is bordered on the south by the City of Elk Grove and on the west by the communities of Vineyard Springs, Florin-Vineyard Gap and North Vineyard Station (“the vineyard communities”). The subject area is defined on the north by land bordering the Mather Planning Area between Bradshaw Road on the west and Sunrise Boulevard on the east, and shares a common boundary with the City of Rancho Cordova along Sunrise Boulevard and Jackson Highway. A map of the Project Area is provided in Figure 1.

The Project Area has become the focus for expansion of the Urban Policy Area (UPA) during meetings and workshops coincident to the update of the Sacramento County General Plan, currently in its fourth year of progress. The Jackson Highway Visioning Project was conceived as a proactive, County-led approach to capitalize on the enormous opportunities offered by the greater Jackson Area. The objective of the Vision effort, as indicated in the Draft Land Use Element, is “coordinated near- and long term planning efforts for the development of the greater Jackson Highway Area that creates cohesive and complete communities while protecting environmental resources.” As such, this Vision will span beyond the 2030 timeframe of the General Plan

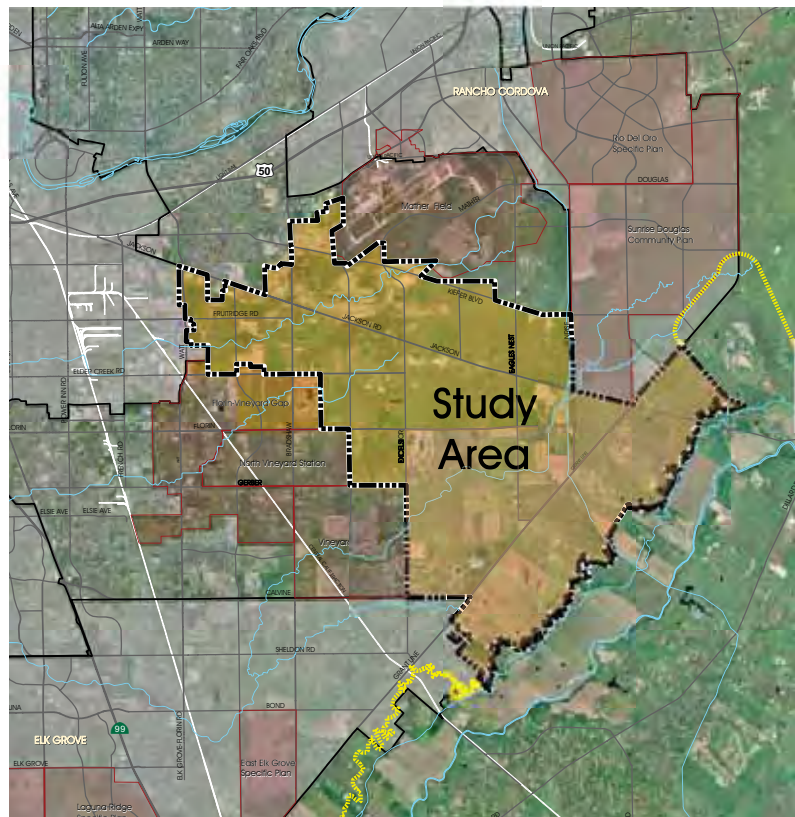


Figure 1 - Project Area

to ensure compatibility between near-term decision-making and the Area’s long-term development potential. This plan will strive to encourage the creation of new communities that are connected and balanced, while preventing piecemeal and haphazard development that can occur as large new communities emerge over an extended period of time.

The County of Sacramento has engaged the services of consulting firm Carter & Burgess to lead a public input and “visioning” process that will assess the existing character and potential urbanization of the Project Area that will guide and inform future County decisions on land uses and policies. The scope of this effort is anticipated to contain a level of detail and policy language that is more specific than the General Plan, but not as explicit as a Community Plan. It will address strategic planning considerations relating to the Jackson Planning Area, including development potential at full build out, phasing of development, location and conceptual layout of land uses, economic development opportunities, environmental issues, and public facilities and infrastructure. Results from the effort may be included in the Draft General Plan.

and circulation plans for the Jackson Highway Visioning Project Area that will be presented for review at a public workshop. Under the County’s direction, these conceptual alternatives will be refined into a Preferred Conceptual Land Plan and Circulation Plan for presentation before the Board of Supervisors. An economic development and public services strategy will also be prepared, coordinated to the land uses and circulation elements of the preferred Alternative Land Plan. The resulting Vision will be consistent with the Regional Blueprint developed by the Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG), and will guide all future master planning efforts in the Jackson Planning Area. The Vision will ensure that all future planning and development efforts work toward accomplishing the County’s overall goal of smart growth and creating complete communities.



Example of Mixed Use

The Jackson Highway Visioning Project will be completed in three phases. Phase 1 comprises the review and compilation of baseline data for the Project Area. Phase 2 entails an aggressive public outreach campaign that is designed to elicit input on future plans for the area from a broad spectrum of community stakeholders, including landowners, business owners, neighboring jurisdictions, environmental groups, service providers, regional agencies, and the general public. This phase will include interviews with focus groups, and interactive workshops involving the broader community, and preparation of a written record summarizing the results of the public outreach. Phase 3 is the preparation of conceptual land plans



Jackson Highway Area , South of Sunrise and Douglas

## SETTING

The Project Area is best characterized by three distinct land use patterns that have evolved under the County’s current General Plan. Lands centered along Jackson Highway between Watt Avenue to one mile east of Bradshaw Road have been largely disturbed and developed with a variety of service commercial and light industrial uses, including a number of building materials, construction supply, and mining businesses (most of Sacramento County’s aggregate needs in the past few decades have been mined from alluvial deposits located in the area around Jackson Highway and Bradshaw Road). The central area between the Mather Planning Area and Kiefer Boulevard on the north, the vineyard communities on the south and west, and Sunrise Boulevard and Grant Line Road on the east is more rural and contains more large mining operations, small farms and tracts of vacant, gently-rolling (less than 3% slope) terrain. The easterly area located between Grant Line Road and the USB along Deer Creek is characterized by a combination of small farms interspersed with clusters of rural custom homes. This area has been identified in previous County General Plan update studies and staff reports as the likely urban-rural transition envisioned at the USB.

Five creek corridors, flowing from east-to-west and fed by a myriad of unnamed channels, traverse

the Project Area. These are, listed geographically from north-to-south: Morrison Creek, Elder Creek (which empties into Gerber Creek at Watt Avenue), Gerber Creek, Laguna Creek and Frye Creek (which empties into Laguna Creek west of Eagles Nest Road). The central and east portions of the Project Area host a significant concentration of jurisdictional wetlands, vernal pool habitat and vernal pool grasslands. These habitats have been identified by the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan, and the Sacramento Valley Conservancy has targeted a large expanse of land south of Jackson Highway, west of Eagles Nest Road and east of Excelsior Road, for permanent protection.



Laguna Creek

**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The Jackson Highway Visioning Area is characterized by a number of opportunities and constraints. The following apply to the majority of the Visioning Area as a whole. Opportunities and constraints specific to particular areas in the Jackson Highway Visioning Area can be found in the sections beginning on page 5.

**Assets and Opportunities:**

- *Adjacent to Urban Area / Logical Expansion Area Close to Urban Core:* This area is adjacent to the urban core of Sacramento County. Surrounded by the City of Sacramento, planned growth areas in the unincorporated County, the Mather employment center and new development in Sunrise Douglas, this area is a logical choice for urban expansion
- *Large Landholding and Interest to Develop Properties:* Mainly large landowners own property in this area, making comprehensive planning development much easier as compared to an area featuring many land owners.
- *Backbone Transportation Infrastructure in Place:* The major transportation infrastructure is already in place including the east-west connections of Jackson Highway, Elder Creek, Florin Road, and Gerber Road; and the north south connections of Bradshaw Road, Watt Ave, Excelsior Road and Sunrise Blvd. The Visioning area also provides connections to Hwy 50 and Hwy 99.

**Constraints:**

- *Environmental Issues:* The preservation of environmental resources within the Jackson Highway Visioning area are crucial to the success of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan. In particular, the Visioning area

is home to a significant number of vernal pool resources as well as riparian habitat and Giant Garter Snake habitat. See the following sections for more discussion on the specific environmental resources throughout the Jackson Highway Visioning area.

- *Drainage Issues:* Aggregate mining in this area has resulted in the existence of large pits of varying depths that are generally below the grade of the surrounding land. Some of these areas are subject to potential localized flooding from Morrison, Elder and Laguna Creeks. In some locations, private levees were built to keep water out of these formerly mined areas; these private levees were built to support mining activities and are not recognized by FEMA nor certified to meet federal standards. FEMA is moving forward separately with a project to update the Countywide floodplain maps, including mapping these mining areas. In addition, the County has preliminarily identified some areas along the Jackson Highway for detention-related facilities.

As such, additional studies are necessary to address drainage and flood-related issues prior to development in the area. Issues to be addressed by such studies include: managing runoff from upstream development, managing on-site drainage, drainage and flood safety related to local creeks that traverse this area, and analysis regarding the potential need to remove, reconstruct or improve existing levees or create new levees to address these issues. It is necessary that these issues are addressed prior to development in order to determine how significant these issues may be and what course(s) of action may be required should development be desired within these mined areas. Given that the County and landowners desire to consider infill development in the area, including within formerly mined areas, it is important to begin studies immediately that address both the feasibility and costs of options to address these issues.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Project Area is impacted directly and indirectly by several planning efforts and initiatives. At previous public workshops County staff has characterized the opportunities and constraints associated with the Project Area. Due to its large size, the area has been divided into three subareas (Figure 2) for purposes of analysis:

- A. Jackson Highway West
- B. Jackson Highway South
- C. Jackson Highway Central and East

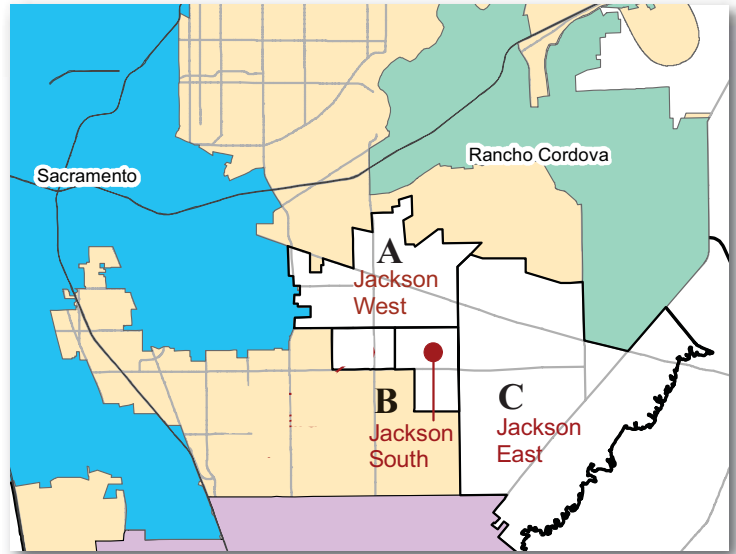


Figure 2- Subareas

### A. Jackson Highway West

#### Assets and Opportunities:

- *Earmarked for Future Urban Uses per Current General Plan:* This area is shown as “Agricultural-Urban Reserve” on the current General Plan Land Use Diagram. The General Plan states that “the Agricultural-Urban Reserve designation identifies areas for urban expansion after the 20-year planning period... These areas will be evaluated for their development potential when the level of growth in the planned urban areas justifies their need, mining is completed, and the area is restored.” As such, this designation is intended to represent the most logical area for future urban expansion after Urban Development Areas have been planned and built out and growth justifies further development outside of the UPA.
- *Immediately Adjacent to Urban Area / Logical Expansion Area Close to Urban Core:* This area is virtually surrounded by urban uses. It is far closer to the urban core of Sacramento County than any other potential new growth area, making it the most logical choice for contiguous urban expansion, all other considerations being equal.
- *Reclaimed Mining Site Reuse Opportunity:* Much of this area has been either completely mined or will be mined out in the near future. Once the aggregate resources have been excavated, these mines may be reclaimed and reused for urban development. In addition, due to mining operations, they are nearly devoid of many environmental constraints found in other potential new growth areas.

- *Large Landholding and Interest to Redevelop Properties:* A few large landowners, including mining interests, own much of the property in this area (see discussion of Teichert land in *Demographics and Economics Section*), making comprehensive planning and development much easier as compared to an area featuring many land owners. There is also strong interest in developing this area within the 2030 planning period.
- *Opportunity to Provide Balanced Land Uses:* There is a great opportunity in this area to provide for non-residential uses such as retail and employment, as the area is currently vastly underserved. The Vineyard area is comprised predominantly of lower density residential development, lacking adjacent supporting retail and employment uses. Developing this area can provide much needed non-residential uses, thereby balancing the land uses in the area.
- *Backbone Transportation Infrastructure in Place:* The major transportation infrastructure is already in place: South Watt Avenue to the west, Bradshaw Road to the east, Elder Creek and Florin Road to the south, and Fruitridge Road and Jackson Highway traversing through the middle. The area also features good access to US 50 Freeway, with both Watt Avenue and Bradshaw Road providing direct connections.
- *Enhanced Transit Opportunities:* Urban development in this area can support the opportunity for Bus Rapid Transit along South Watt Avenue, as well as Light Rail or other enhanced transit service.
- *Morrison Creek:* Mining activity has had a significant detrimental impact on Morrison Creek. Development in this

area may allow for Morrison Creek to be returned to a natural riparian corridor, providing recreational opportunities, open space and wildlife habitat.

- *Sewer capacity:* The new Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District's Bradshaw interceptor, completed in late 2006, provides service to this area. There are no capacity or timing constraints related to the provision of sewer service in this area.

**Constraints:**

- *Environmental Issues:* There are scattered vernal pools in this area, but they are not targeted by the HCP for preservation. In addition, Elder Creek has been identified as Giant Garter Snake Habitat.



Typical Wet Pasture

- *Mather Noise Contours:* The noise contours associated with Mather are the largest constraint to urban development in this area. The Board has yet to make a determination regarding which noise contours to use for planning purposes. Regardless of future Board action, there will be acreage that will be not be developable for residential uses, as well as areas where residential uses will be allowed given proper noise mitigation measures are provided.



- *Circulation:* Mather Field presents a constraint to north-south circulation, since no major roadways run through it to provide a direct link to US 50 Freeway. In addition, Jackson Highway is currently only two lanes, which constrains capacity. However, this roadway is shown as a six lane thoroughfare on the Transportation Diagram.
- *Aggregate Resource Areas Yet to be Mined Out:* While many of the aggregate areas have been mined out, there are many aggregates sites that have yet to be mined. While most (if not all) aggregate sites should be mined out in the near future, timing the development of this area in concert with future mining operations will be difficult, although by no means impossible, to accomplish.



Typical Aggregate Mine / Processor

- *Closed Landfill:* There is a closed landfill southwest of Mather. However, it is located within Mather’s 65 CNEL noise contour and safety zone, so it would be incompatible for most urban sensitive uses regardless of its status as a closed landfill.

**B. Jackson Highway South (The “Elbow Area”)**

**Assets and Opportunities:**

- *No significant Environmental Constraints:* Minor vernal pool concentrations are the largest environmental constraint in this area. However, these populations are not considerably dense or contiguous with other populations, nor are they targeted by the HCP for preservation.
- *Immediately Adjacent to Urban Area:* While this area is not as close as Jackson Highway west to the urban core, it is still adjacent to the urban area, specifically the planned growth areas of Florin-Vineyard Gap, North Vineyard Station, and Vineyard Springs. This area would be a logical expansion of these growth areas.
- *Backbone Transportation Infrastructure in Place:* The major transportation infrastructure is already in place: Bradshaw Road to the west, Excelsior Road to the east, and Florin Road and Gerber Road to the south. The area also features good access to US 50 Freeway and Highway 99. Bradshaw Road provides a direct connection from this area to US 50, while Elder Creek, Florin and Gerber Roads provide access to Highway 99.
- *No Aggregate Resource Area Designations:* Unlike the other Jackson Highway corridor subareas, there are no Aggregate Resource Area designations in this area, nor is there any current mining activity.
- *Large Landholding and Interest to Develop Properties:* A few large landowners own much of the property in this area (*such as Lennar Homes*), making comprehensive planning and development much easier as compared to an area with many land owners. The landowners have shown

strong interest in developing this area within the 2030 planning period.

- *New Development Can Help Fund Required Improvements:* Development within this area can help fund infrastructure improvements planned for the Vineyard area. This area can be considered for annexation into established or planned financing districts.
- *Area Studied for Infrastructure Improvements:* This area has been studied during the preparation and processing of plans prepared for the vineyard communities area.
- *Sewer Capacity:* The new Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District’s Bradshaw interceptor, completed in late 2006, provides service to this area. There are no capacity or timing constraints related to the provision of sewer service in this area.

**Constraints:**

- *Additional Burden on Congested East-West Connections:* Growth in this area would severely impact east-west connections that already experience tremendous traffic flow.
- *Gerber Creek:* Gerber Creek is a riparian corridor that provides suitable habitat for endangered species. In addition, there are concerns related to localized flooding and water quality when developing near a creek channel.
- *Circulation:* Mather Field presents a constraint to north-south circulation, since no major roadways run through it to provide a direct link to US 50 Freeway. In addition, Jackson Highway is currently only two lanes, creating a constraint to capacity. However, this roadway is

shown as a six lane thoroughfare on the Transportation Diagram.

- *Water:* Provision of water may be a constraint, as the water in this area is currently being sent to Sunrise Douglas to service new growth in this area.
- *Closed Landfill:* The closed landfill in the south part of this area would not be appropriate for development, although it may be considered for a park or open space use.

**C. Jackson Highway Central & East (Bradshaw to Sunrise)**

**Assets and Opportunities:**

- *Northern Portion Adjacent to Sunrise Douglas:* The northern portion of this area is close to new development in Sunrise Douglas, as well as the Mather Field employment center.
- *Backbone Transportation Infrastructure in Place:* The major transportation infrastructure is already in place: Excelsior Road to the west, Eagles Nest Road to the east, Grant Line Road to the south and Florin Road intersecting the area. However, this area does not provide good access to either US 50 or Highway 99 due to its proximity to the urban fringe.
- *Planned Elk Grove/ Rancho Cordova/ El Dorado Connector:* The Elk Grove–Rancho Cordova–El Dorado Connector (the Connector) is a proposed multi-modal transportation project that links the cities of Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, Folsom, and the community of El Dorado Hills. The underlying purpose of the Connector is to link residential areas and employment centers in the corridor, serve both local and regional travel, and relieve congestion on the heavily congested existing two-

lane roadways. The connector project is governed by a 5-agency Joint Powers Authority (JPA) under the technical direction of the Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG). The corridor traverses the Project Area and will include a new Bus Rapid Transit line, thereby creating opportunities for critical linkages between existing and new growth centers inside and outside the study area.

- *Large Landholding and Interest to Develop Properties:* A few large landowners own much of the property in this area, making comprehensive planning and development much easier as compared to an area featuring many owners. There is also interest in developing this area within the 2030 planning period.



Typical Wet Meadow

**Constraints:**

- *Critical Habitat Designation:* The US Fish and Wildlife Service has designated a large swath of land (southeast of Mather Field and north of the Jackson Highway) as critical habitat for vernal pool species. Critical habitat is defined as specific areas that are essential to the conservation of a Federally-listed species, and which may require special management considerations or protection.
- *Preservation Sites and Mitigation Banks:* A large portion of this sub-area is constrained by numerous preservation areas and mitigation banks; the area in question extends from Jackson Highway to Grant Line Road, generally bound by Excelsior Road to the west and Eagles Nest Road to the east. The South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP) has identified numerous preservation sites in this area, and a large amount of acreage has been set aside as a mitigation bank. The Sacramento Valley Conservancy (SVC) also controls a large amount of acreage in this area. All land in these areas would be inappropriate for urbanization. Furthermore, future adjacent development may impact the viability of these areas as both open space, ecological and habitat reserves.
- *Vernal Pools:* While most of the vernal pools in this area are within the Critical Habitat Designation area, SSHCP preservation site, mitigation bank or SVC property, there are other populations outside of these areas that would present a constraint to growth. The most notable concentrations can be found between Eagles Nest Road and Sunrise Boulevard. Some of these concentrations may be needed mitigation to ensure viability of the SSHCP.

- *SSHCP Preserve Corridor Connecting Mather to SVC area:* The SSHCP calls for a habitat/open space corridor that would link resources in Mather Field to the Sacramento Valley Conservancy lands.
- *No Certain Alignment for Planned Elk Grove/ Rancho Cordova/ El Dorado Connector:* The JPA is considering up to four preliminary alignments of the corridor – two that following the existing alignment of Grant Line Road and two that follow other road alignments (Sunrise Boulevard and Bradshaw Road) in the Project Area. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/ EIS) began in January 2008, and likely surpass the timeframe for completing the Jackson Highway Visioning Project. This will hinder the ability to make concise decisions regarding creation of critical nodes and community linkages in the planning area.
- *Laguna Creek:* Laguna Creek is a riparian corridor that provides suitable habitat for endangered species. In addition, there are concerns related to localized flooding and water quality when developing near a creek channel.
- *Sewer Capacity:* The new Bradshaw interceptor provides service to a portion of this area. This portion will experience no capacity or timing constraints related to the provision of sewer service in this area; this area is generally bound by Eagles Nest to the east, Excelsior to the west, Jackson Highway to the north and half-way between Jackson Highway and Florin Road to the south. The rest of this area is to be served by the new Laguna Creek interceptor, scheduled to be completed between 2020-2025, creating a tremendous timing constraint.



Jackson Highway at Grant Line

- *Sacramento Raceway Area:* The Sacramento Raceway is located between Mather Field and Jackson Highway. Noise and air pollution associated with the raceway make adjacent residential and other sensitive uses incompatible.
- *Rendering Plant:* The existing rendering plant is incompatible with adjacent development, due primarily to its production of offensive odors. An appropriate buffer would have to be established around the plant if it continued to operate while development was planned to occur in its vicinity.
- *Aggregate Resource Areas Yet to be Mined Out:* As with the Jackson Highway West subarea, there are aggregate resource areas that have yet to be mined out, creating a challenge to coordinate future development and mining activities.
- *Conflicts with Existing Industrial and Agricultural-Residential Parcels:* There is a large established industrial zone in the northern portion of this area, as well as agricultural/ residential parcels to the south and east. Urban uses may not be compatible with these established uses, necessitating appropriate buffers.

Figures illustrating the land use and planning context of the Project Area are provided on the succeeding pages. Figure 3 depicts municipal context of the study area. Figure 4 shows the policy and land use constraints in the area, and Figure 5 shows the natural and environmental constraints in the area. Figure 6 depicts other environmental considerations, and Figure 7 depicts the County's Draft 2030 Transportation Plan for the area. Figures 8-11 depict the four conceptual alignments for the Elk Grove/ Rancho Cordova/ El Dorado Connector within the project area.

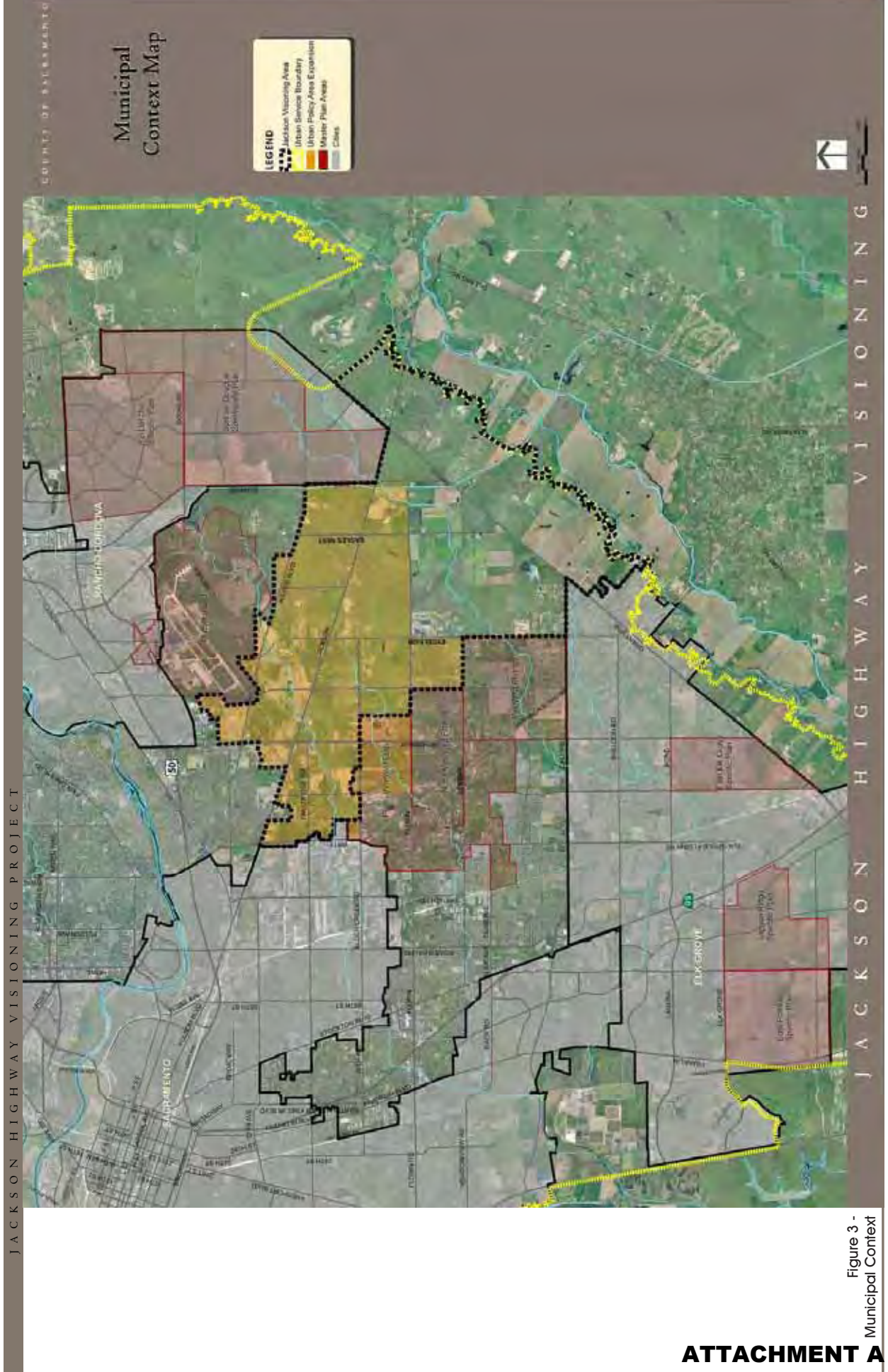
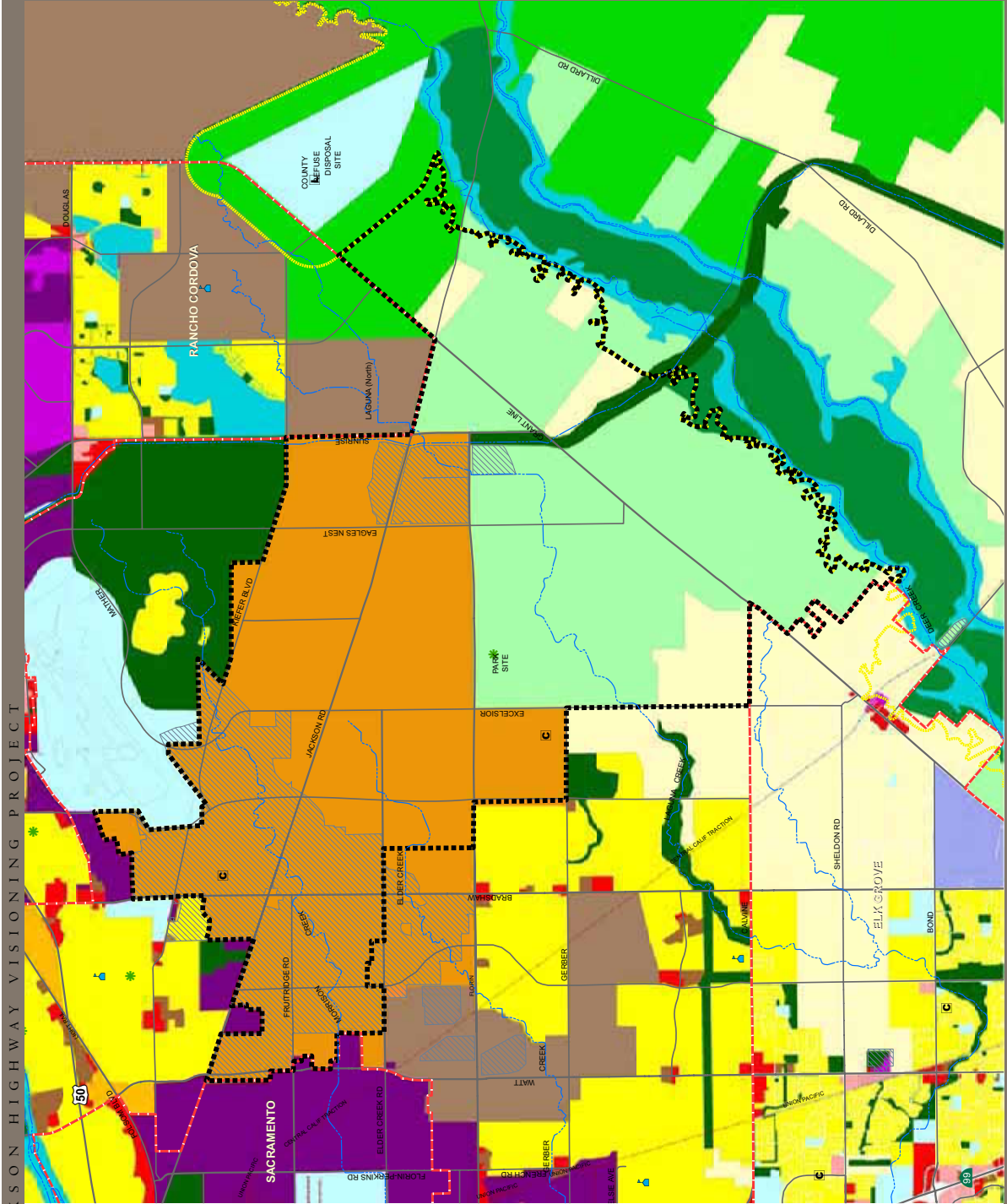
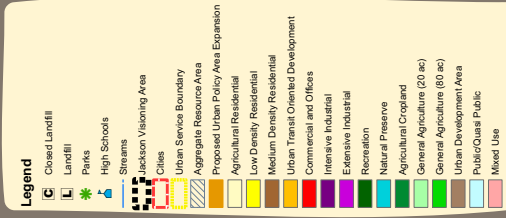


Figure 3 -  
Municipal Context

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

# Land Use Context Map



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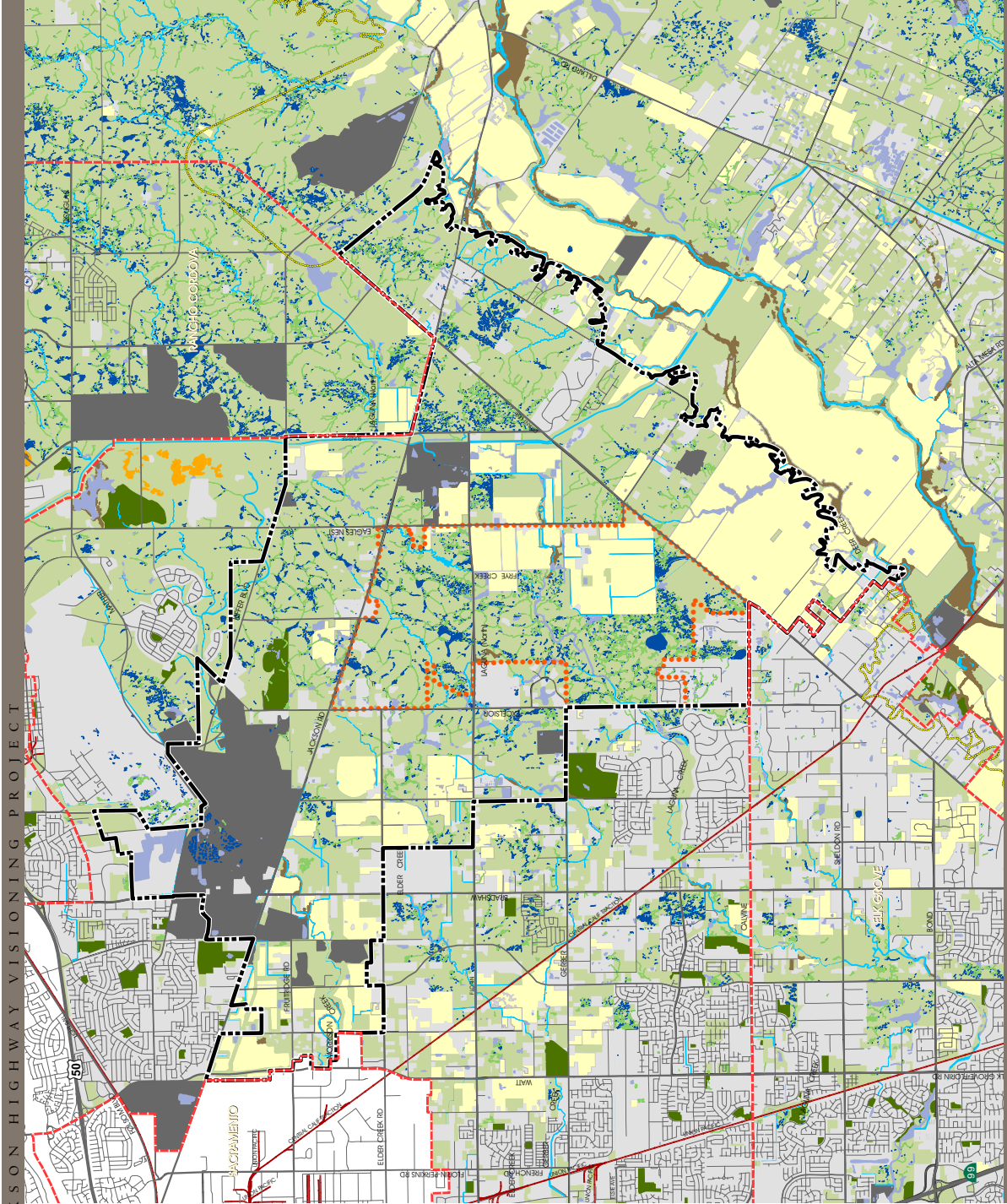
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Figure 4 - Policy & Planning Constraints

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO



# Environmental Context Map



**LEGEND**

- Jackson Visioning Area
- Cities
- Urban Service Boundary
- Vernal Pool Phase/Passive Project Boundary(S/C)
- Vernal Pool
- Freshwater Marsh
- Open Water
- Seasonal Wetlands
- Vernal Impoundment
- Wetland Restoration
- Streams/Creeks
- Aqueducts
- Swale
- Valley Grassland
- Savannah
- Cropland
- Orchards
- Vineyards
- Integrated Pasture-Grassland
- Cottonwood Woodland
- Mixed Riparian Woodland
- Mixed Riparian Scrub
- Eucalyptus Woodland
- Blue Oak Woodland
- Valley Oak Riparian Woodland
- Woodland Restoration
- Recreation/Landscaped
- High Density Development
- Low Density Development
- Wine Farms
- Disturbed
- Water Roads



Carter+Burgess

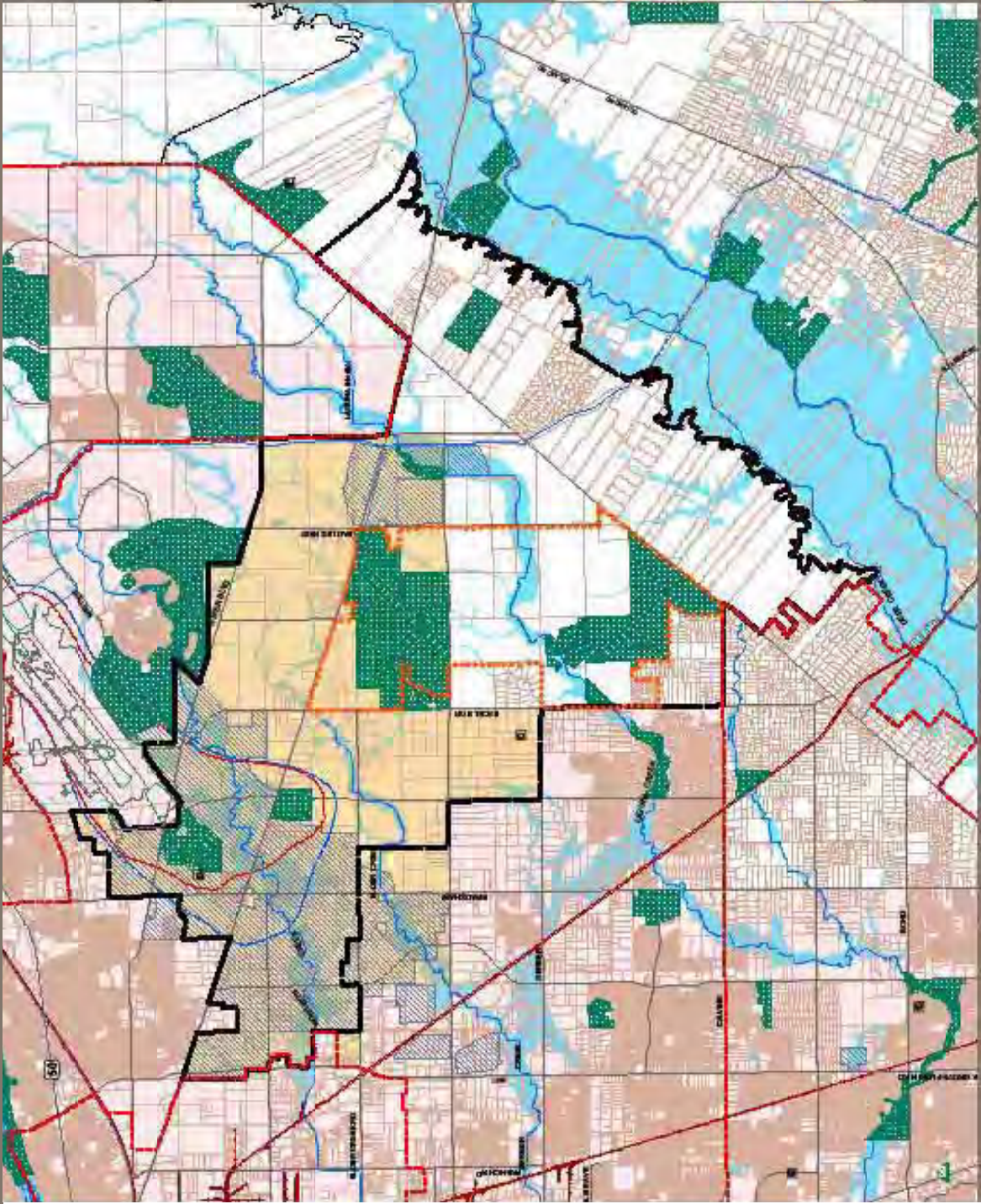
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Figure 5 - Natural & Environmental Constraints



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Other Areas of Concern Context Map

**LEGEND**

- Closed Landfill
- Landfill
- Sacramento Valley Community Property
- Cities
- Jackson Midtown Area
- Protected Area
- Streams
- Light Rail Transit
- Study Zone
- Great Lakes Visioning Area
- All Other Areas in the project area (not shown on the map)
- All Other Areas in the project area (not shown on the map)
- Appropriate Resource Area
- Proposed Urban Policy Area Expansion
- Floodplain (F)
- Existing Urban Policy Area



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Figure 6 - Other Area of Concern Context Map

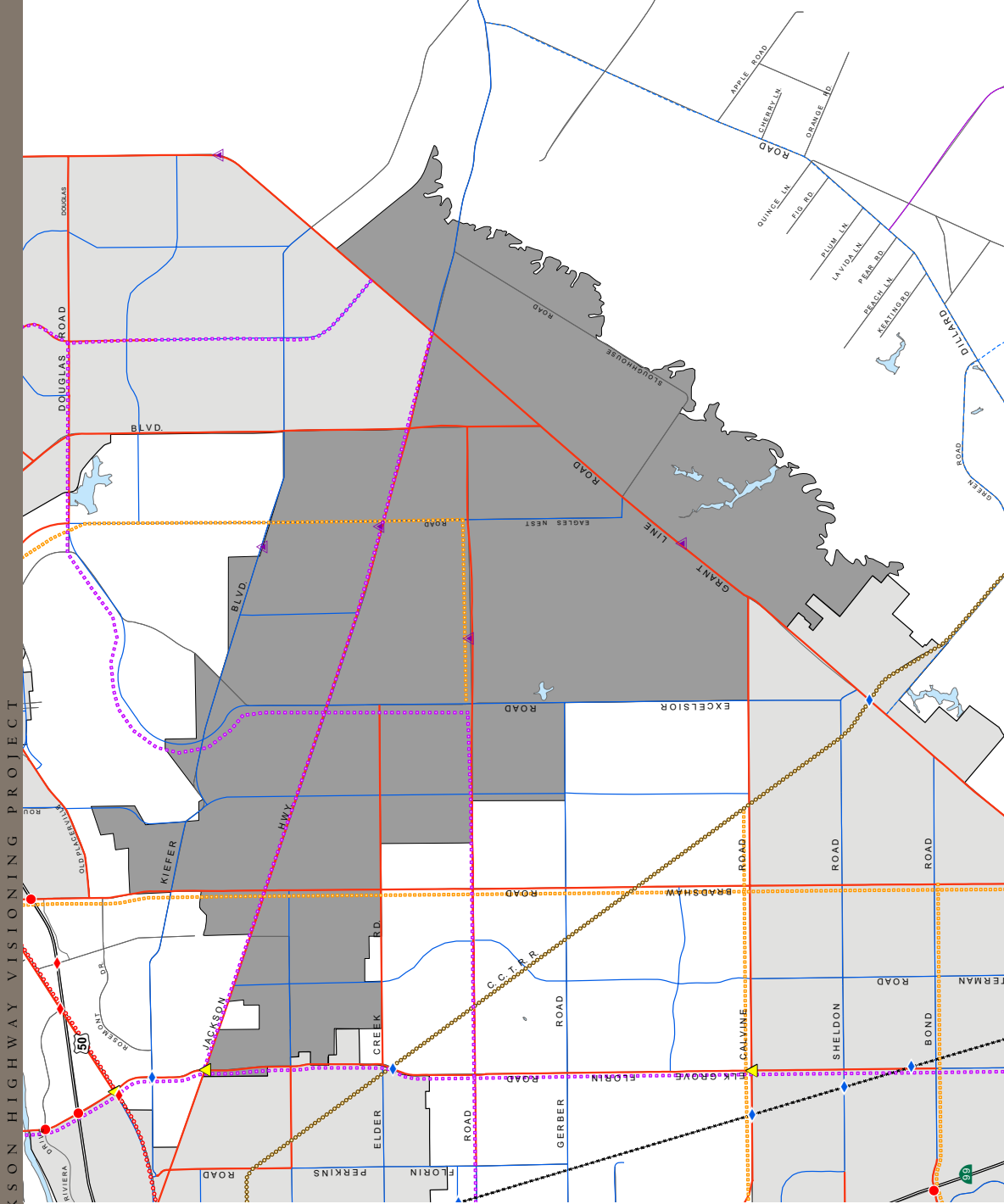
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO



# Draft Transportation Plan 2030

## LEGEND

- Roadways**
  - Freeways
  - Thoroughfares - 6 Lanes
  - Pre - 2030
  - Aerials - 4 Lanes
  - Pre - 2030
  - Post - 2030
  - Urban & Rural Collectors - 2 Lanes
  - Pre - 2030
- Transit**
  - LRT
  - Regional Rail
  - BRT - Mixed Use Lanes
  - Feeder Line
- Other**
  - Streets
  - Railroads
  - Transportation Reservation Corridor
  - Existing Interchange
  - Existing Grade Separation
  - Future Grade Separation
  - Future Urban Interchange
  - Wildlife Grade Separation
  - Incorporated Acre
  - Visiting Area Boundary



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Figure 7 - Transportation Plan

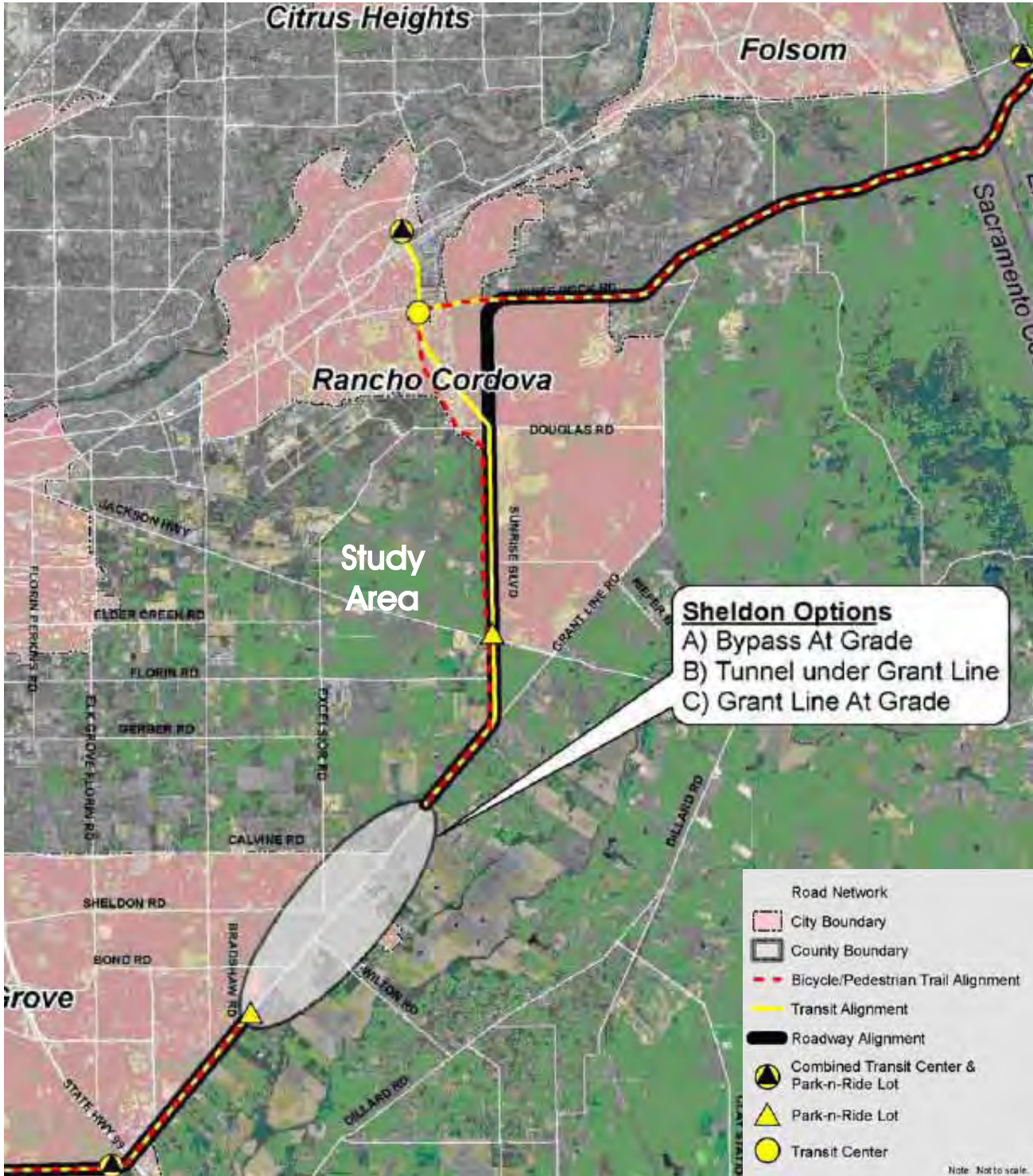


Figure 8 - Concept 1 for Elk Grove/ Rancho Cordova/ El Dorado Connector

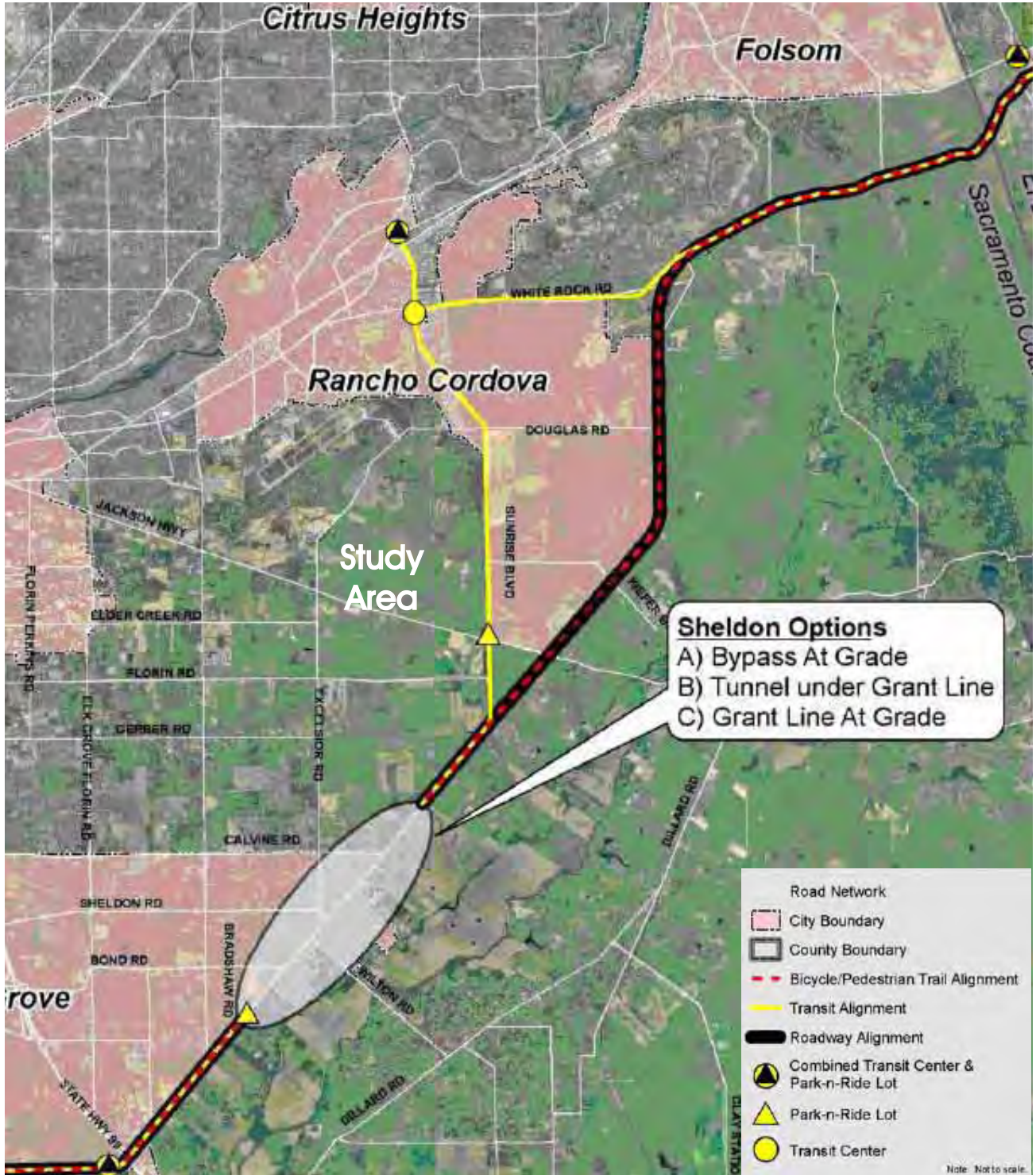


Figure 9 - Concept 2 for Elk Grove/ Rancho Cordova/ El Dorado Connector

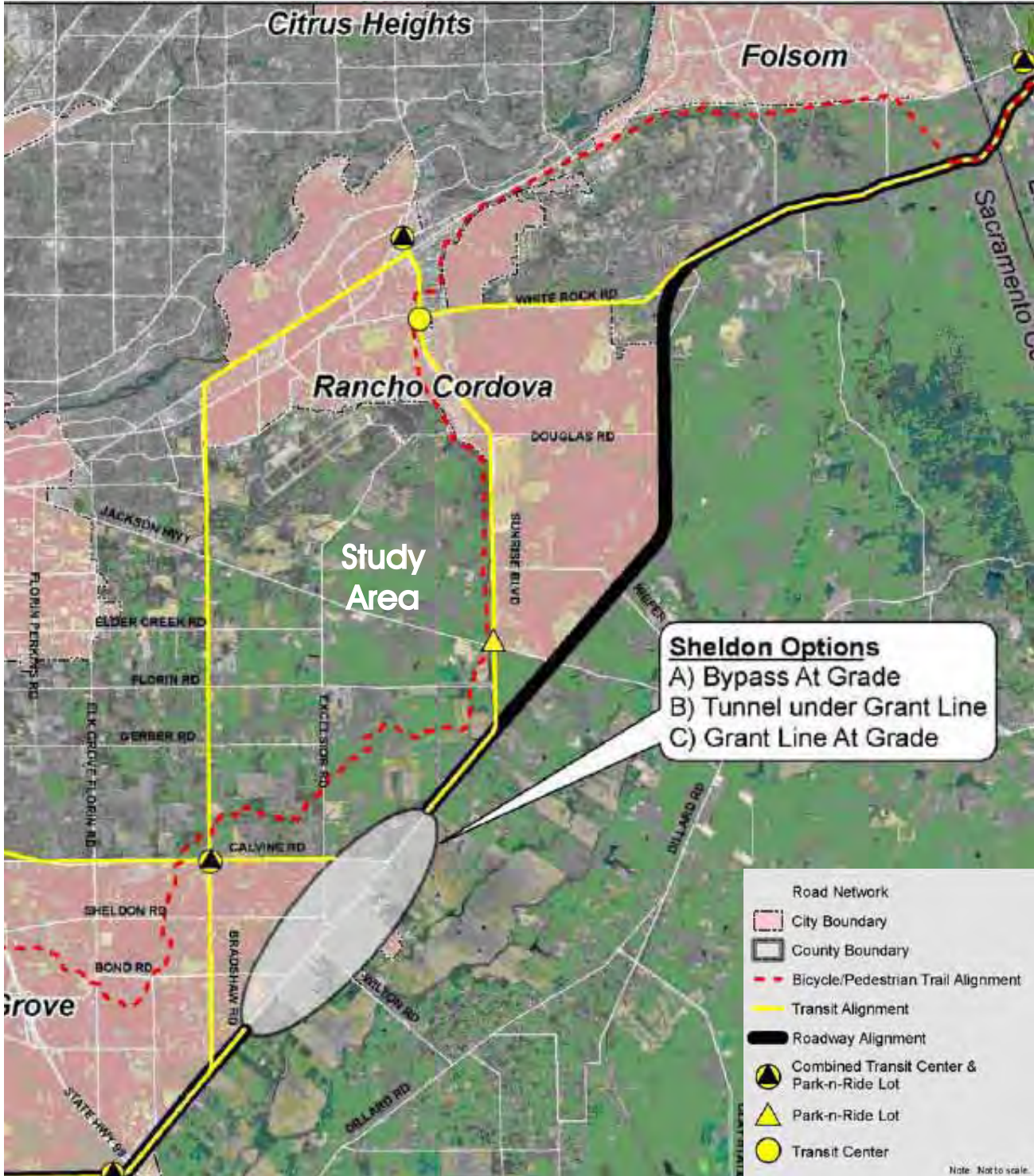


Figure 10 - Concept 3 for Elk Grove/ Rancho Cordova/ El Dorado Connector

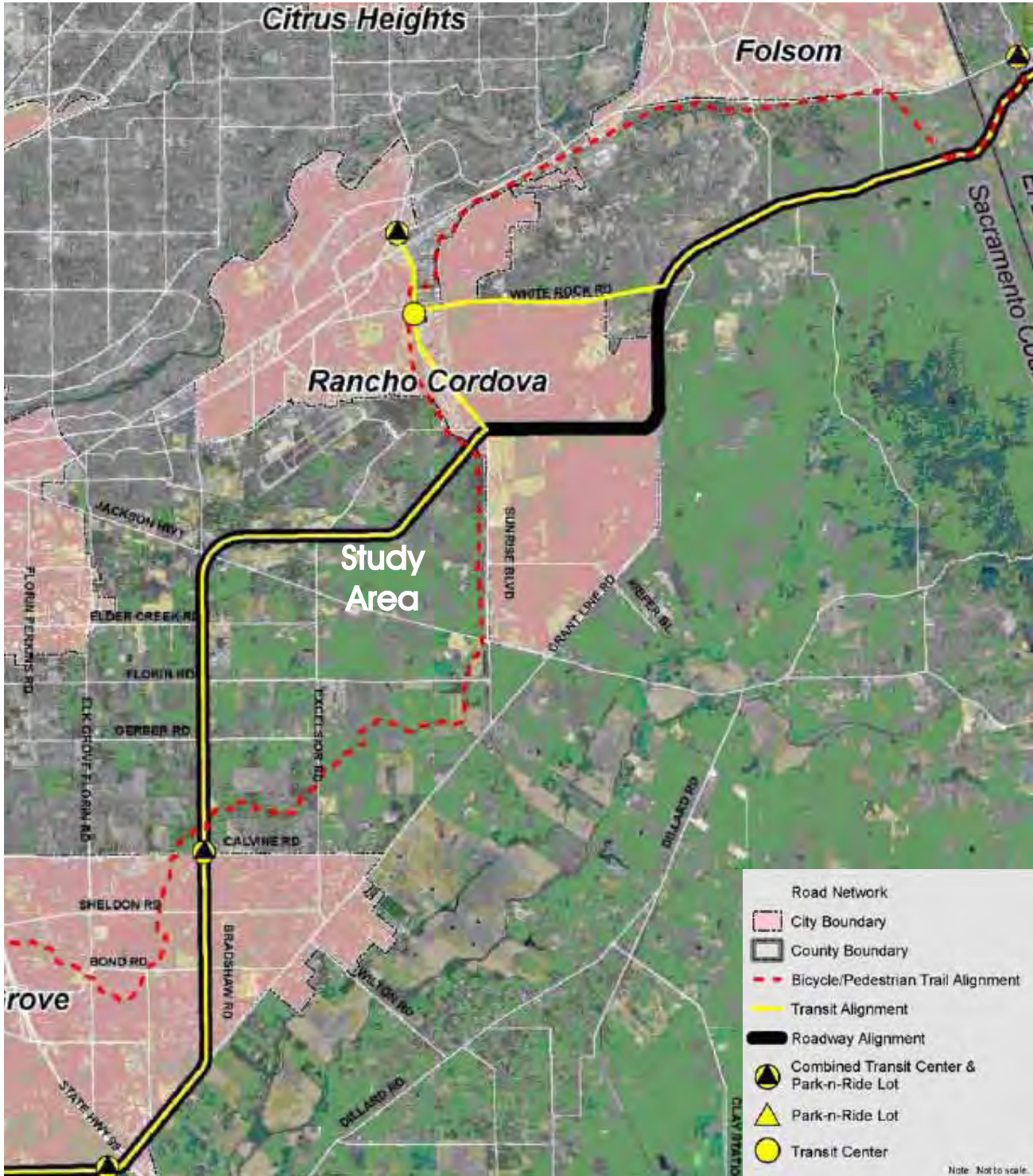


Figure 11 - Concept 4 for Elk Grove/ Rancho Cordova/ El Dorado Connector