



SACRAMENTO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
1112 I Street, Suite 100 • Sacramento, CA 95814 • (916) 874-6458 • Fax (916) 874-2939

July 25, 2008

To: Responsible and Affected Agencies, and Interested Parties

From: **Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission**

Subject: Early Consultation Request: City of Elk Grove Proposed Sphere of Influence
Amendment – South of Kammerer Road (LAFC #04-08)

The Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is the lead agency for the above-cited proposal, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Sacramento LAFCo is in the process of preparing an RFP to select an environmental consultant for the Elk Grove Sphere of Influence Amendment proposal. We are circulating this request for early consultation pursuant to Section 15063 (g) to obtain your recommendations regarding the scope of necessary environmental studies for project review. The information you provide will assist in evaluating the scope of the environmental documentation and preparation of an initial study for this project.

The project description together with the proposed SOIA boundary and supplemental maps are enclosed to aid in your review. Any assistance you can provide in this effort would be greatly appreciated.

It would be helpful to receive your comments regarding your areas of concern at the earliest possible date, but no later than **August 25, 2008**. Please feel free to contact me if any further information is needed.

Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission


Donald J. Lockhart, AICP
Assistant Executive Officer
donald.lockhart@saclafco.org
(916) 874-6458

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

Incorporated in 2000, the existing City SOI is coterminous with the city limits. The affected territory is immediately south and southeast of the city.

Existing City and SOI:	26,974 acres
Requested SOI Amendment:	10,536 acres

The Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission, as CEQA lead agency, will prepare an Initial Study to assess the environmental impacts of the proposal.

The City of Elk Grove's residential, industrial and commercial land inventory is gradually building out. The City anticipates that it may need to annex territory in the future. Lands must be included in the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) prior to annexation. The existing SOI is coterminous with the City's boundaries. The proposed project consists of an SOI Amendment (SOIA) to designate areas where urbanization via annexation may be appropriate in light of the most efficient provision of municipal services, with the least environmental impact. The City of Elk Grove General Plan identifies the SOI Amendment area as an Urban Study Area in which the potential for urban development should be evaluated. The General Plan does not specifically identify that the Urban Study Areas are to be annexed into the City and urbanized. Thus the General Plan does not designate any specific urban land uses.

PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

As proposed, the SOIA area covers approximately 10,500+ acres immediately south and southeast of the City of Elk Grove. The City General Plan identifies approximately 8,000 acres for urban development, and the remainder is designated as non-urbanized lands. The SOI Amendment area is located beyond the current City limits and can generally be described as the areas south of Bilby Road, Kammerer Road and Grant Line Road, extending south to Eschinger Road and the Cosumnes River, extending east along the Cosumnes River and just past Freeman Road, and extending west towards Interstate 5 and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. This unincorporated territory is currently within the jurisdiction of the County of Sacramento. Existing land uses within the proposed SOIA are primarily agricultural land uses. Other land uses include floodplains, open space, vacant lands, low density agricultural-residential, agriculture production, industrial, and commercial land uses. Topography of the proposed SOI Amendment is generally flat, with slopes averaging between 0 and 5 percent. Land cover in the proposed SOI Amendment area is predominantly cropland, including vineyards, and irrigated pasture/grassland. Other land cover types include valley grasslands, seasonal wetlands, irrigation swales, and streams/creeks. Portions of the SOI Amendment are within the FEMA 100-year floodplain. Circulation is provided through a number of minor, rural County roads.

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The City of Elk Grove is requesting the Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission conduct proceedings to consider the proposed Sphere of Influence Amendment and the

associated Municipal Services Review (MSR). As defined in state regulations implementing LAFCo guiding legislation, "Sphere of influence" means a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of the city or special district, as determined by LAFCo. LAFCo develops and determines the SOI of each local governmental agency within a county in order to carry out LAFCo's purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping logical and orderly development, and coordination of local governmental agencies to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities. In practice, placement of an area within a city's SOI indicates that LAFCo has identified the area as appropriate for future urban development, including the efficient provision of necessary urban services and utilities, to meet future demands for residences and employment.

The proposed City of Elk Grove SOIA would not change the existing land use designations, zoning regulations, or jurisdiction of either Sacramento County or the City of Elk Grove within the SOIA area. Land uses in the SOI Amendment area would remain consistent with the County of Sacramento's General Plan and zoning ordinance. The City may initiate a phased annexation program and comprehensive land use planning effort for the area in the event the SOIA is approved. Subsequent land use planning, including pre-zoning of land uses within the SOIA area by the City, and annexation would be subject to the appropriate level of CEQA review by the City as the CEQA lead agency.

CITY OF ELK GROVE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To implement Elk Grove General Plan Policy LU- 16 that calls for the study of potential urban development in the proposed SOIA area.
2. To establish a boundary to focus comprehensive planning for potential future growth
3. Achieve proper and orderly growth for the City of Elk Grove while supporting the preservation of agricultural, habitat, and open space uses and activities

CITY OF ELK GROVE GROWTH PLANNING AND ANTICIPATED USES

As identified by the City, anticipated land uses in the SOIA could include residential housing as well as commercial and industrial uses. The Elk Grove General Plan requires the implementation of a comprehensive city-wide strategy for the preservation of open space, habitat and agriculture, both inside and outside the existing city limits (Policy LU-17). Therefore, the SOI Amendment area could also include open space, habitat and agricultural land uses.

CITY OF ELK GROVE GENERAL PLAN

The SOI Amendment area is designated by the City of Elk Grove General Plan as an Urban Study Area. The Urban Study Area is envisioned by the City's General Plan as the area where future urban growth would be most likely to occur.

Under Land Use Policy 16 (Policy LU-16), the City's General Plan envisioned future growth in the areas to be generally in compliance with the following criteria:

- Development should be limited to areas outside of the 100-year floodplain.
- Development should take place in compliance with the goals and policies of this General Plan.
- Any study of potential land uses in these areas should be accomplished in cooperation with the County of Sacramento, the Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission, and other agencies and parties with ownership or jurisdiction of lands in and near the study area.
- Any study of land uses in these areas should be accompanied by an environmental evaluation of the potential impacts of development.

Prior to the completion of land use studies, the City's policy is that County of Sacramento land use designations in effect as of December 31, 2002, are retained.

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

The City of Elk Grove anticipates that the SOIA area will represent the ultimate boundary for the City. However, the City's General Plan and its underlying growth projections are based on a 20-year timeframe.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY URBAN SERVICES BOUNDARY

The 1993 Sacramento County General Plan established an Urban Services Boundary (USB) line to contain growth in the unincorporated area. The USB is carried forward in Draft 2030 General Plan Update. The USB is based upon jurisdictional, natural and environmental constraints to urban growth. In addition, the USB defines the area expected to receive urban levels of public infrastructure and services within the General Plan planning period.

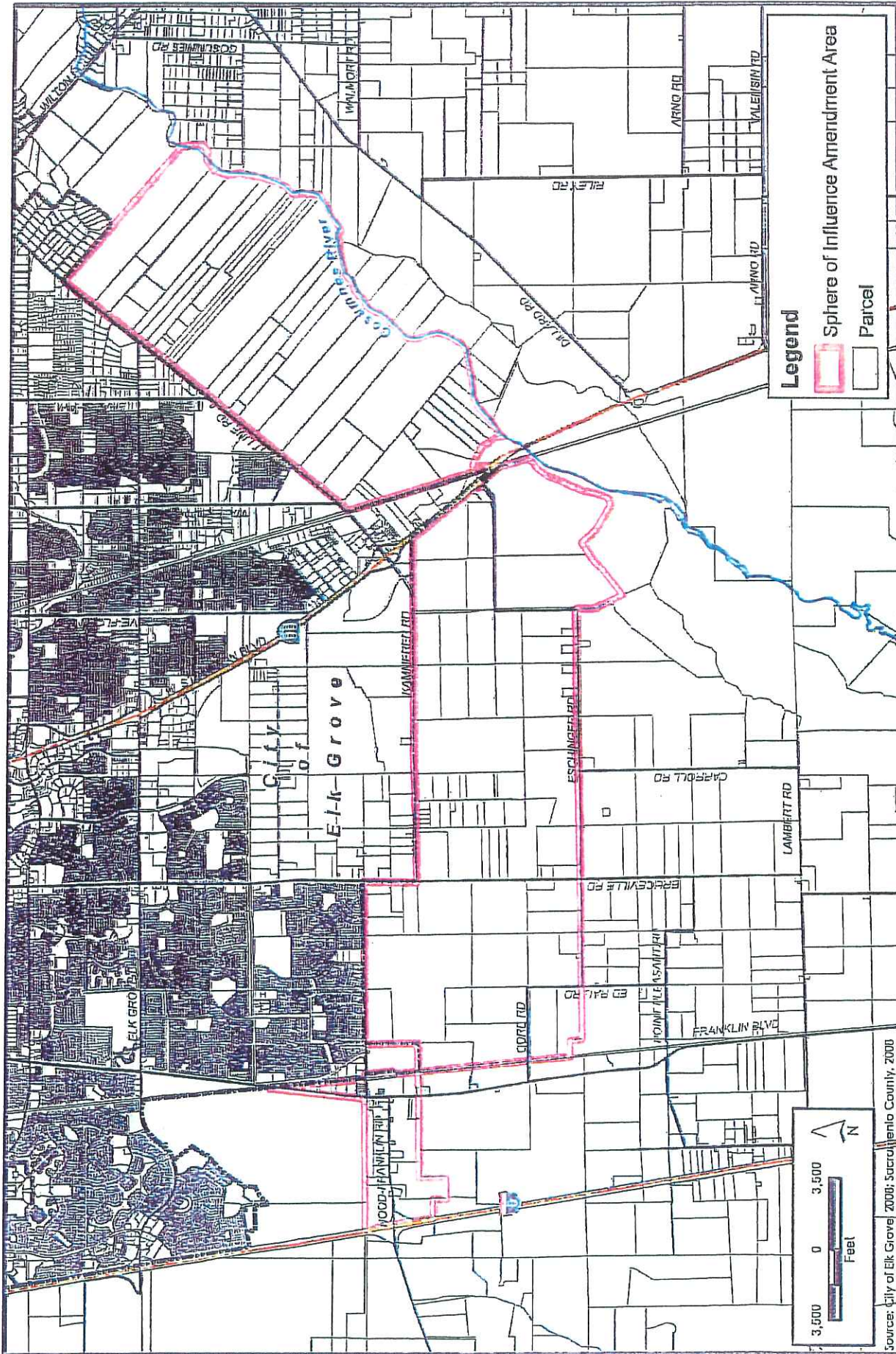
The proposed SOIA area extends beyond the County's existing and proposed Urban Services Boundary (USB). The existing USB extends just south of the City of Elk Grove's boundaries along Kammerer Road and just southeast of the City along the 100-year floodplain. The areas of the proposed City of Elk Grove SOIA outside of the USB are between Kammerer Road and Eschinger Road, and the Hood-Franklin Road interchange at Interstate 5. Service providers other than the City of Elk Grove, including the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, would need to consider the long-range planning of necessary facilities to support urbanization within the proposed SOIA area. The County General Plan may be required to be amended to extend the USB line south in order for the County to be able to provide municipal services in the SOIA area. Pursuant to the requirements of LAFCo, the City of Elk Grove has prepared a Municipal Services Review (MSR), which evaluates the ability of the different service providers to extend and provide adequate municipal services to the proposed SOIA area upon anticipated future growth.

SOUTH SACRAMENTO HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

The SOIA area will be addressed by the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP), which is currently under environmental review with the County of Sacramento Department of

Environmental Review and Assessment. The County Planning and Community Development Department is leading the HCP effort. The SSHCP is a regional approach to addressing issues related to urban development, habitat conservation, open space protection and agricultural protection that will consolidate environmental efforts to protect and enhance wetlands (primarily vernal pools), aquatic, and upland habitats to provide ecologically viable conservation areas. It will also minimize regulatory hurdles and streamline the permitting process for projects that engage in development or covered activities. The SSHCP will cover 41 different species of plants and wildlife including 11 that are state or federally listed as threatened or endangered. The SSHCP will be an agreement between state/federal wildlife and wetland regulators and participating local jurisdictions, which will allow landowners to engage in the "incidental take" of listed species in return for conservation commitments to the participating local jurisdictions. These commitments will be fulfilled through take avoidance and minimization measures and by using funds from a per-acre fee paid by developers to mitigate habitat impacts from new development or from land and easement dedications.

The proposed SOIA will need to be consistent with the SSHCP. At its current stage of development, the SSHCP has not formally established an area for habitat preservation but has identified conservation zones which include a targeted amount of acreage per zone that must be achieved to meet SSHCP conservation strategy goals and objectives. The permit area is that locale in which the SSHCP is requesting authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game for activities and projects that may result in the take of species covered by the plan. Permit areas have been designated as those locations within the SSHCP Study Area that are also within the Sacramento County Urban Services Boundary, within the incorporated cities of Rancho Cordova, Elk Grove, Galt and Galt's Sphere of Influence. On August 22, 2007, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors received and approved a staff report that summarized the negotiations between the City of Elk Grove and Sacramento County regarding the City's proposed future expansion and the SSHCP. The staff report states that a preliminary analysis indicated that there is adequate mitigation capacity in the SSHCP study area to accommodate the City's proposed SOIA area. The staff report also states that the County and City will work together to prepare an analysis that will determine whether sufficient additional appropriate habitat exists within the SSHCP Study Area to mitigate impacts of potential future urbanization within the proposed expansion area, thus reaffirming or refuting County staffs preliminary analysis. In addition, the County committed to specifically exclude the City of Elk Grove's proposed expansion area as a target area for potential mitigation or habitat preserve with the understanding that consistent with how the SSHCP treats all lands within the permit area there may be specific sites that are identified for preservation with concurrence of the City. Of primary concern is the protection of the Cosumnes River and Cosumnes River floodplain which is a high priority area for preservation. As anticipated in the SSHCP, the City will explore the possibility of amending the plan to cover the proposed SOI area in the future.



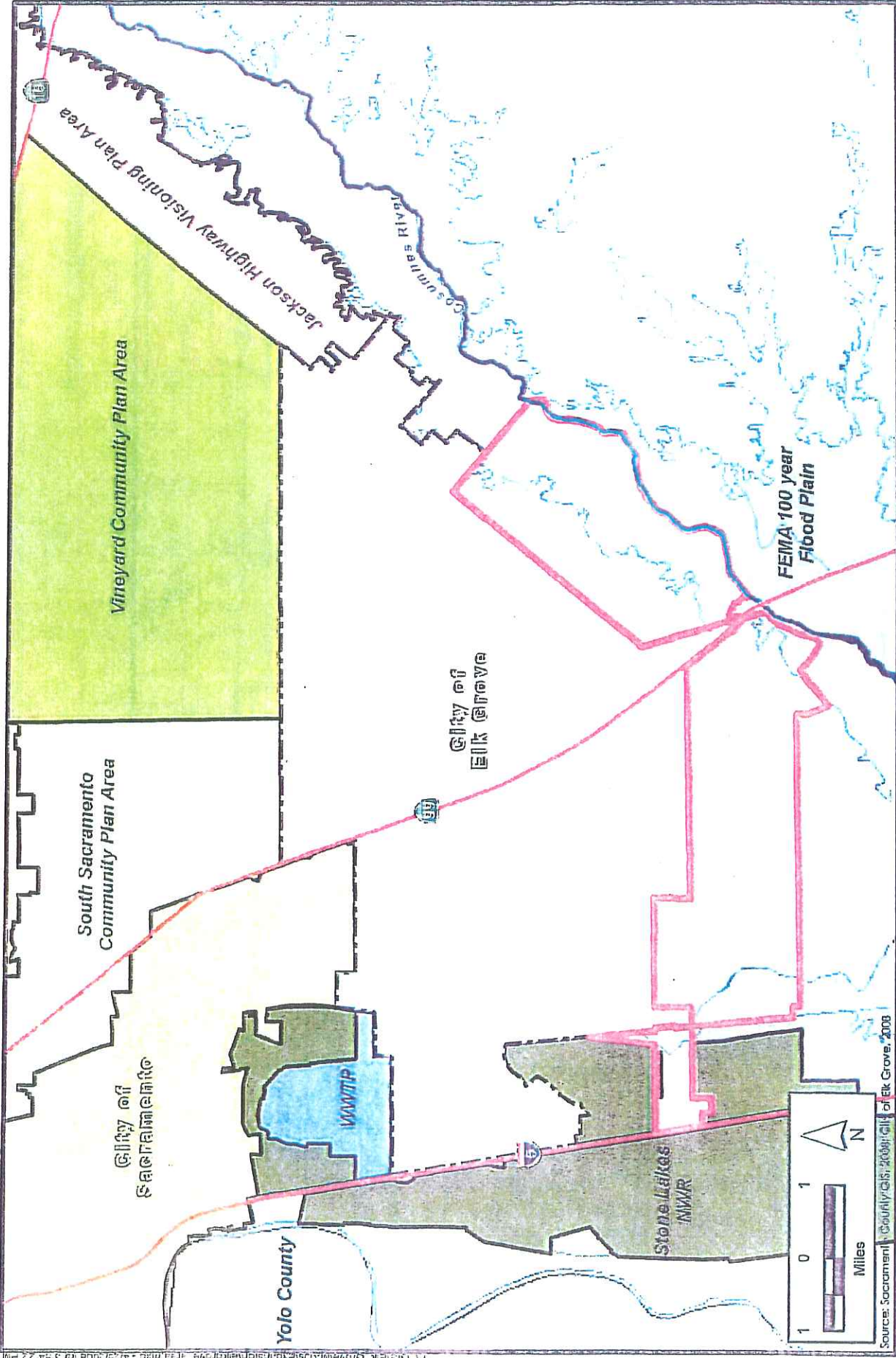
Attachment A
Sphere of Influence Amendment Area

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City of Elk Grove
 Development Services

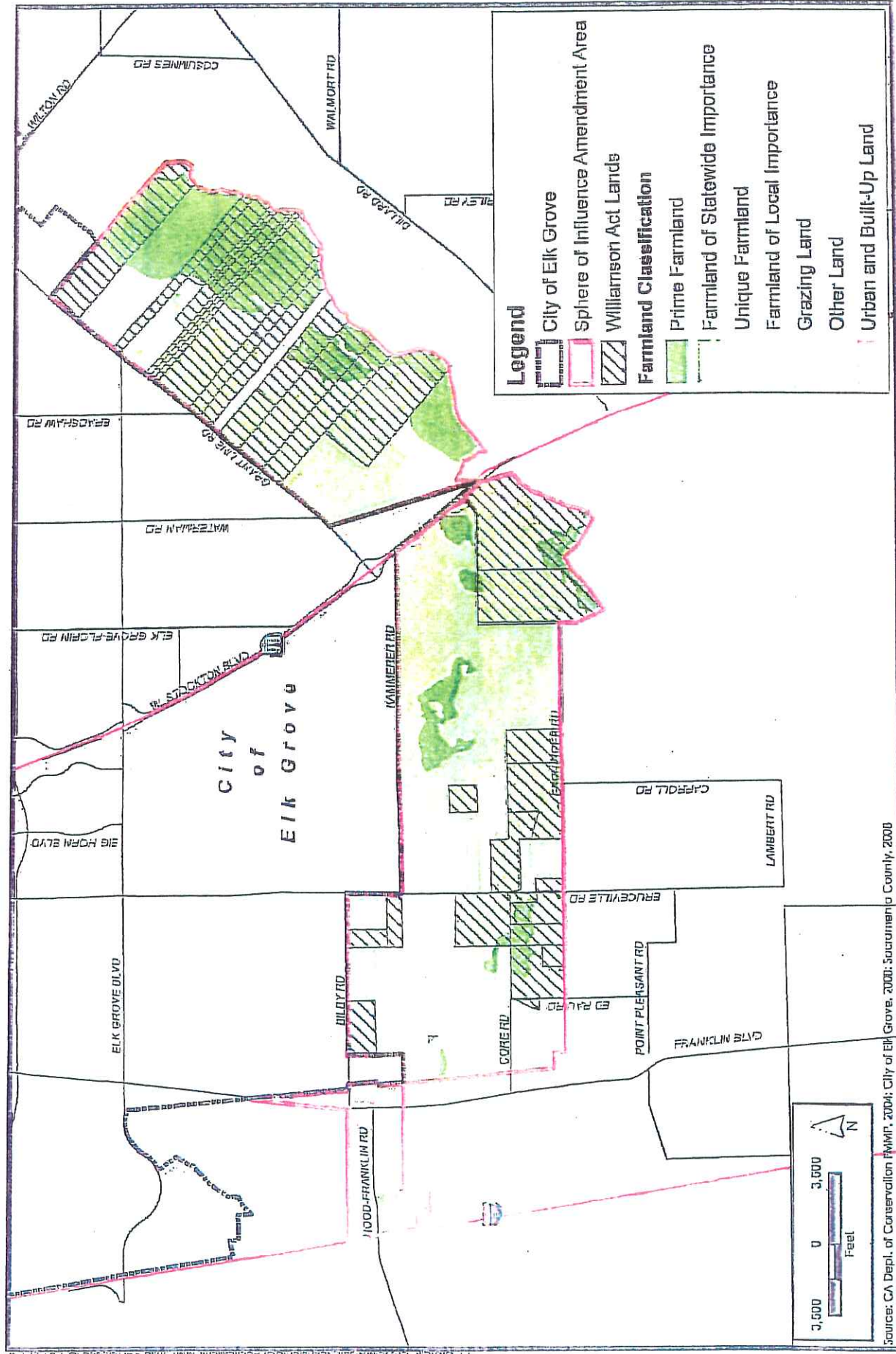


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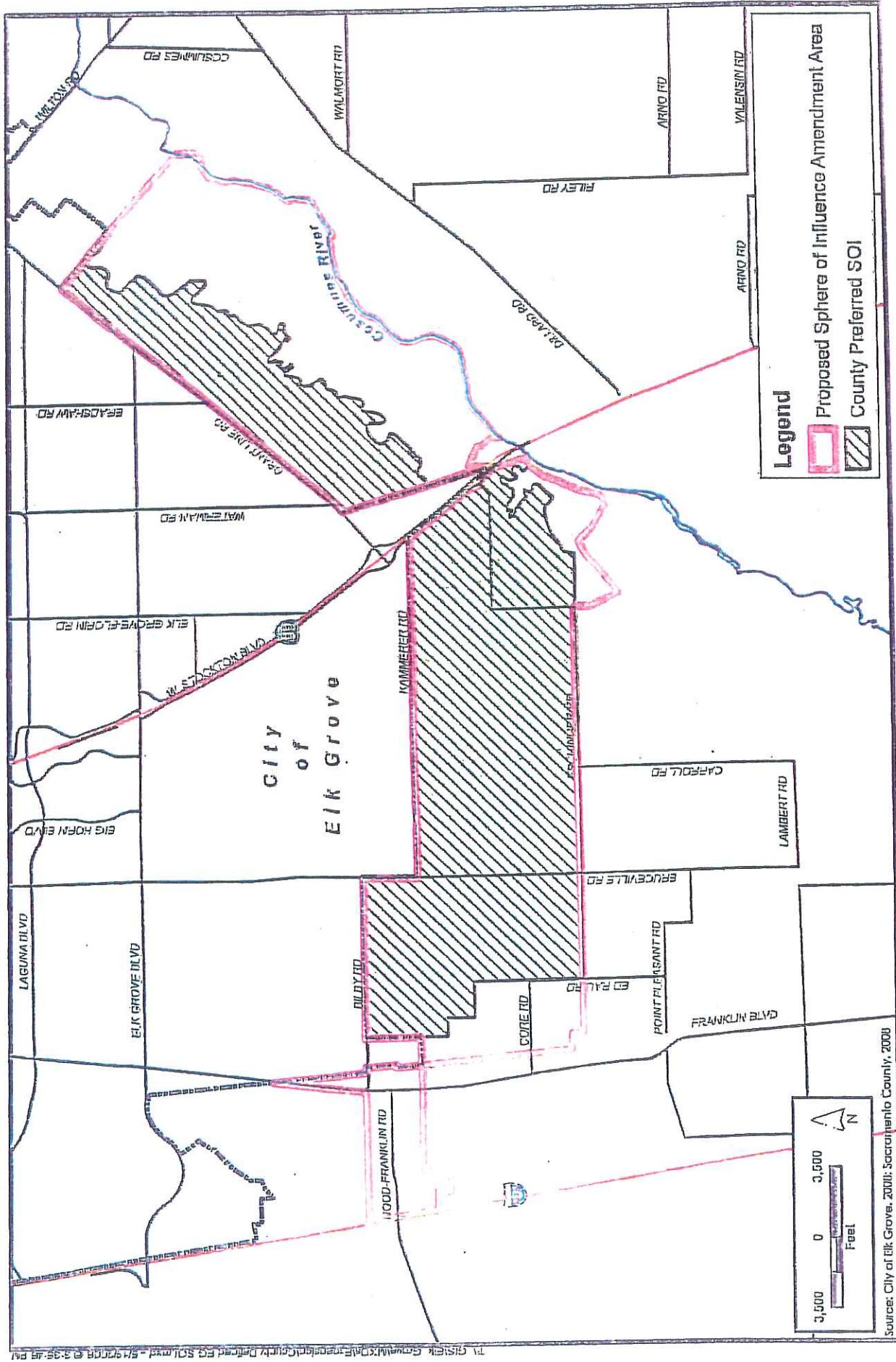


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City of Elk Grove
 Development Services



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Attachment P
 Comparison of County's Preferred SOI and the City's Proposed SOI

City of Elk Grove
 Development Services



ELK GROVE
THE ORIGINAL BEAST TOWN

Source: City of Elk Grove, 2008; Sacramento County, 2000

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